John Henry Wigmore (1863-1943): A Sesquicentennial Appreciation

Joel Fishman, Ph.D. and Joshua Boston

A legal scholar of exceptional status and unique insight, John Henry Wigmore quite literally wrote the book on evidence as commonly understood in and beyond his time, titled *Treatise on the Anglo-American System of Evidence in Trials at Common Law or Wigmore on Evidence*. He is also known for being one of the founding members of *Harvard Law Review*, and a professor and dean of the Northwestern University Law School.¹ With a bibliography of over 900 works, including many addresses, law review articles, books, pamphlets and translations, his contributions to the study of law are simply numerous as he dedicated himself to the writing of countless publications that continue to be relevant long after his death.² The 150th anniversary of Wigmore’s birth this year makes it appropriate to explore and commemorate these achievements and contributions to the legal field.

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Wigmore was born on March 4, 1863 in San Francisco, California. He was educated at the Urban Academy in San Francisco and subsequently received a degree from Harvard University in 1883; this was followed by a degree from Harvard Law School in 1887. Along with John Jay McKelvey, Joseph E. Beale, Julian W. Mack, the four were the initial board of the first volume of *Harvard Law Review*. McKelvey was Editor-in-Chief, while Wigmore began the “Recent Cases” department. Shortly after his graduation from Harvard Law School, he was given the opportunity to teach law at Keio University in Japan in 1889 in which he learned Japanese in only four months; this allowed him to develop a study of comparative law between (at the time) the largely esoteric Japanese legal system and the Anglo-American law of his class. This study in Japan led to Wigmore’s being considered one of the foremost authorities in comparative law, as he would go on to author sets of papers for the *Harvard Law Review* such as “The Pledge Idea: A Study of Comparative (Historical) Legal Ideas.”

Wigmore’s time in Japan continued to influence his work up until his death in various ways; some of the last volumes Wigmore published dealt with the law of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867) (16 volumes in all), which Wigmore had studied while in Japan. Around that same time, Wigmore also published new volumes such as *A Kaleidoscope of Justice* and *International Law and Practice*; these were more evidence of his continued dedication to the study of comparative law. He also served as editor of *Selected Essays in Anglo-American History* (3 vols., 1907-1909), *The Modern Legal Philosophy Series* (15 vols., 1911-1925) and *The Continental Legal History Series* (11 vols. 1912-1927).
Wigmore returned to the United States in 1893 and assumed the position of Professor of Law at Northwestern University School of Law. In his first decade he wrote three major articles on the history of tort law which received praise from several noted scholars including Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. This led to a mentor-protégé relationship between Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and Wigmore which grew by the first decade of the twentieth century into a friendship of equals. Wigmore valued Holmes’s *The Common Law* (1881) and Holmes liked Wigmore’s use of his views on judicial constraint in his treatise on evidence. In 1901, Wigmore became the dean of the Law School, a position he held until 1929. He then returned to the position of Professor of Law until 1934 and then became Dean Emeritus upon retiring from the school. In addition to his legal expertise, Wigmore was a man of strong personal conviction as well, turning down several lucrative offers after having accepted the position of dean at Northwestern. One of his first major accomplishments was moving into a new law school building and building up the law library (something he worked on until a year before his death). His leadership efforts led him through projects with the American Bar Association and the Association of American Law Schools, and he was instrumental in establishing the first legal aid clinic in the United States at Northwestern. He organized and founded the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, the Air Law Institute and the Scientific Crime Detection laboratory. As part of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, he helped to create in 1910 the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* which continued after the Institute was abandoned by the Law School and still being published today.

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14 Id. at 278-79. Porwancher argues that both men were indebted to their law professor James Bradley Thayer for this viewpoint on judicial constraint that Holmes reflected in his *Lochner v. New York* dissent.

15 Roalfe, *Wigmore*, supra note 1, at 178-84 covers his resignation, while his role as dean emeritus is discussed on pages 185-97.


17 Roalfe, *supra* note 1, at 449.

18 Kocourek, *supra* note 7, at 123.


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Wigmore’s work on evidence began as the editor of Simon Greenleaf’s *Treatise on the Law of Evidence* (16th ed. 1899) which won the first Ames Prize awarded in 1902 for the most meritorious work written in the previous five years.20 *Wigmore on Evidence*, the work for which Wigmore is best known, was said to be one of Wigmore’s greatest contributions to the legal field; published in its first form in 1904-1905 in four volumes, it was recognized as the turning point in Wigmore’s career and the definitive action that brought Wigmore into the respected position he continues to hold more than a century later.21 The stated purpose of *Wigmore on Evidence* was threefold: “first to expound the Anglo-American law of Evidence as a system of reasoned principles and rules; secondly, to deal with the apparently warring mass of judicial precedents as the consistent product of these principles and rules; and thirdly, to furnish all the materials for ascertaining the present state of the law in the half a hundred independent American jurisdictions.”22 Because of Wigmore’s unique position as a scholar of comparative law, he was able to use *Wigmore on Evidence* to illuminate and present in sum the bases and intricacies of domestic evidence law from an incomparable perspective.23 The second edition was published in 1923, in 5 volumes with a subsequent supplementary volume in 1934.24 Wigmore updated this treatise again in 1940, in a ten-volume edition; this third update was his final update to the treatise in his own words as subsequent editions would only appear after his tragic death on April 20, 1943.25 This third edition contained 85,000 judicial citations (compared to 40,000 for the first edition and 55,000 for the second edition) and 20,000 statutory citations plus other secondary sources. It consisted of 7,324 pages with all three editions and supplements numbering 19,358 pages!26 In light of his significant contributions to the study, it was once said of Wigmore that “[a]mong knowledgeable people in and out of the legal profession, the name of Dean John Henry Wigmore is synonymous with the law of evidence.” 72

A second major publication was *The Principles of Judicial Proof as Given by Logic, Psychology, and General Experience, and Illustrated by Judicial Trials* (1913). He substituted the word “principles” for “science” which he characterized as “the book aspires to offer, though in tentative form only, a novum organum for the study of Judicial Evidence.” It was concerned with the science of proof rather than with admissibility (the procedural rules prescribed by the law), for he believed that the latter would become less important and the former more important with the passage of time.” 72

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20 Roalfe, *Wigmore*, supra note 1 at 43.
21 Roalfe, supra note 1, at 445; Kocourek, supra note 7, at 123.
22 Holdsworth, supra note 7, at 453.
23 Id.
24 Roalfe, supra note 1, at 445.
Wigmore’s final opus was *A Panorama of the World’s Legal Systems*. Published in 1928, it was the last of his more famous works and outlined the overarching structure of sixteen major legal systems across history. Panorama was an altogether different sort of book of legal instruction, as it was based on an idea of teaching through representation of historical legal outlines in a series of pictures. Some scholars have said that Panorama’s intent was to popularize the study of comparative law and to familiarize legal scholars with some of the patterns of law that appeared in various legal systems. While receiving mixed reviews, Panorama did just that, as the illustrations included in the book humanized the idea of law and functioned as a method of attraction for students entering comparative law. Other articles on comparative law authored by Wigmore include various short operas such as “Our Treaty with Japan” in which he discusses a treaty between Japan and the United States in 1889 and “A Novel Suit” which deals with trademarking in Japan.

Wigmore was also strongly involved in the creation of the American Judicature society and was consultant of the American Law Institute. Many of these systems put into place by Wigmore, in addition to his legal works and selections for law libraries, are still in use today in varying capacity. Further beyond the legal field, Dean Wigmore’s projects include the study of music and poetry; he published a volume of 16 original piano compositions and nearly twenty of his works were categorized as pertaining to music and verse. These included whimsical titles such as “Lyrics of a Lawyer’s Leisure,” which comprised a madrigal, ten ballads, two hymns and three choruses. He also published two bibliographies of legal novels that were perennial listings over the decades and helped lead to the Law and Literature Movement.

Following a luncheon meeting, Wigmore died on April 19, 1943, eighty years and ten weeks old, due to an unfortunate traffic accident while riding in a taxi cab in Chicago. His friend, Albert Kocourek called it a “stupid mischance” and thought that Wigmore might have lived until the nineties like his contemporaries, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and Frederick Pollock.

Wigmore’s expertise stretched far beyond mere legal learnedness in any one field; his scholarship and diligence propelled him toward understanding multiple subjects. It is this scholarship and diligence that have carved the name of John Henry Wigmore into the tablet of history, so that a century and a half after his birth, his incredible contributions continue to be appreciated.

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*Psychology, and General Experience and Illustrated in Judicial Trials.*

29 Abbott, *supra* note 6, at 13; the first edition was published by West Publishing Co.; it was reprinted in 1936 by the Washington Law Book Co. and by the William M. Gaunt Co. in 1992.

30 Holdsworth, *supra* note 6, at 454.


32 *Id.*


34 *Id.*

35 75 NW. U.L. Rev. at 82.

36 *Id.*


38 Roalfe, Wigmore, *supra* note 1 at 275.
Litchfield Law School Notebooks
Found
William Sleeman

The familiar adage that the best way to hide something is to leave it in plain sight has once again been proven correct. The Supreme Court of the United States Library’s five volume set of notebooks from the Litchfield Law School had been presumed lost since (and possibly before) 1988 when an inventory of the unprocessed Elbridge T. Gerry gift was conducted. In fact, the last known reference to these unique historical items was in a 1938 Law Library Journal (LLJ) article by then Librarian of the Court, Oscar D. Clarke. Librarian Clarke made a complete examination of the five volumes, attributing them to a Litchfield student, Henry L. Clarke (with the help of several other Litchfield students) and quoted from the notebooks extensively in his article. Despite the lack of a full bibliographic citation in the LLJ article the attribution of the work to Clarke was repeated in Marian McKenna’s book Tapping Reeve and the Litchfield Law School (1986) although McKenna does not mention examining the volumes. More recently, in 2007 an e-mail request by an outside researcher, citing the McKenna book, sent the Supreme Court Library’s Research Department once more in search of the five Henry Clarke notebooks, a search that was also unsuccessful.

In 2011, when I arrived at the Court the Librarian at the time, Judith Gaskell, asked me to continue the search for this material. As one of the primary tasks that I was asked to coordinate in my new position was the cataloging and arrangement of the remaining Elbridge T. Gerry gifts it was hoped that the Litchfield volumes attributed to Henry Clarke would be located during this effort. As my staff and I worked on this project I would occasionally look through the unprocessed boxes and old volumes hoping that the Litchfield notebooks would ‘leap out at me’ but the little hope I did have was never fulfilled. Although disappointed I was not too surprised; after all, if they had last been seen for certain in 1938, and others before me had looked for them to no avail, what were the chances that the Litchfield Law School notebooks of Henry Clarke were still around?

Actually, it turns out that the chances were quite good! In August as I was pulling old inventory cards for some other titles processed from the Gerry project I came across an older, typed card for five volumes of manuscript notes of the lectures of James Gould. Gould of course was a student, partner and later successor of Tapping Reeve, the founder of the Litchfield Law School. What was this? No one had ever mentioned that we owned a second set of Litchfield books? My staff and I had shifted these five unprocessed volumes several times as we sorted out the Gerry backlog to be processed, could these be the missing items? I would point out here that the 1938 article clearly described the volumes as the lecture notes of Henry Clarke as did all of the subsequent correspondence and published references but that the inventory card I stumbled upon made no mention of student Henry Clarke. I quickly went down to the rare book area and carefully took these now much more interesting potential treasures up to my office. Then, by using the 1938 article by Librarian Oscar Clarke, I was able to match all but one of his quotations (and I suspect that one is there also and I have just not located it yet) to the text of the five volumes of Gould Law School Lectures and I also found scattered throughout the five volumes the name Henry Clarke or the initials H.L.C. as well as the names of several of his Litchfield Law School friends who shared his school experience and who Court Librarian Oscar Clarke also mentioned in the 1938 article. This confirmed that the Gould’s Lectures were in fact the ‘missing’ Henry Clarke notebooks and that they had been on a shelf in the rare book room the whole time!

I could conclude and say that the five volumes of Litchfield Law School Lectures are home once

2 Librarian Clarke does not clarify in his article if student “Henry Clarke” is related or not, but he does allude to the possibility as part of his initial interest in the volumes. Id. at 353.
again but it doesn’t appear that they ever left. So, instead, I will conclude, as did Librarian Oscar Clarke before me, by quoting student Henry Clarke at the end of his lecture notes on Mortgages (apparently not his favorite subject) and say that the mystery of the missing Litchfield lectures notes is, at last, “Finis – Hurrah!”

Bill Sleeman is Assistant Librarian for Technical Services and Special Collections at the Supreme Court of the United States Law Library.

Surprise— you are just now receiving the Fall 2013 issue of LH&RB. Although we are now into April, this is not an April Fool’s Day joke, and I owe the SIS membership an apology for the delay in getting this issue to you.

I had hoped to have the Fall 2013 out in late November or early December. How er, in the fall I developed congestive heart failure, apparently from a virus, and was out on medical leave for much of November, December and February and all of January. Fortunately a heart cauterization revealed that I have no blockages. My heart was weakened—I was down to 20 per cent heart function when I was admitted to the Carlisle Hospital. However, I have been undergoing cardio rehabilitation and I am now feeling much better.

Anyway, before I got sick I had received submissions for the Fall 2013 issue of LH&RB. Since I had promised our authors that this material would be in that issue, I thought that it would be best to publish it as if I had remained healthy and the issue had gone out on time. I hope that you will enjoy this much-belated issue! If you had submitted something for inclusion and do not see it, please let me know. It probably arrived when I was out sick and got missed.

The deadline for the Spring 2014 issue is May 27th. It will come out on time!

Despite the month listed on the masthead, best wishes for a happy spring!

Mark Podvia

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4 James Gould, Lectures on Law Delivered by James Gould and Transcribed by Henry L. Clarke, et. al. (Litchfield, 1826), vol. 5 – Mortgages.
For its one independently produced session of the 2013 Annual Meeting, the LHRB-SIS put its best foot forward with this educational and moving program. Chronologically, this session covered quite a bit of ground, starting with the government ordered Japanese American internment during World War II, the ensuing litigation during the war and a generation later, and the joint efforts at Seattle University School of Law to commemorate the internees.

First to speak was Lorraine Bannai, Professor of Lawyering Skills and Director of the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality at Seattle University School of Law. She spoke with particular authority as the descendent of Japanese American internees. After offering an overview of the government acts that led to the internment and the two main cases heard in the U.S. Supreme Court, Prof. Bannai delved into the less familiar aftermath after WWII. After a new evidence came to light in the 1980s that the government had altered evidence submitted to the Court, the cases were reopened. This litigation effort is known as the coram nobis cases (a phrase deriving from an ancient writ) and led by Prof. Bannai and other descendants of Japanese American internees. The judgments were vacated based on prosecutorial misconduct. From this ensued a series of other remedial acts such as a congressional commission, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, and finally, the founding of the Korematsu Center itself.

Next to speak was Stephanie Wilson, Head of Reference Services at Seattle University School of Law Library. Since the founding of the Center, the law library has collaborated on three exhibits: two on the original named litigants, Fred T. Korematsu and Gordon Hirabayashi, and one for the Seattle University Honorary Degrees program, awarded to former internees who had been unable to complete their degrees because of the internment. This portion of the session provided helpful logistical details on the nuts and bolts of putting together an exhibit. Ms. Wilson also went over the efforts undertaken for selecting the content for the exhibits, such as reaching out to local and national museums and archives, working with family members, and creative research strategies such as looking at the witnesses listed on marriage certificates as a means of locating honorees. In the course of displaying images of the final results, Ms. Wilson was able to recount telling details about the litigants that brought them to life as individuals. For instance, the exhibit about Gordon Hirabayashi included a postcard he mailed while hitchhiking from Washington State to a labor camp in Arizona to carry out his sentence—the government did not pay for his transport and he figured he should not have to do so either!

Program Review

by

Kasia Solon Cristobal

Law Libraries and Advocacy: Using Special Collections to Tell the Story of the Japanese American Internment

Monday, July 15, 2014, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Stacy Etheredge, Co-Coordinator and Co-Moderator, West Virginia University College of Law Library

Etheldra G. Scoggin, Co-Coordinator and Co-Moderator, Loyola University College of Law Library

Lorraine Bannai, Seattle University School of Law

Stephanie Wilson, Seattle University School of Law Library

Etheldra G. Scoggin, Co-Coordinator and Co-Moderator, Loyola University College of Law Library

Lorraine Bannai, Seattle University School of Law

Stephanie Wilson, Seattle University School of Law Library

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Stacy Etheredge, Co-Coordinator and Co-Moderator, closed the session on a personal note by noting that this would be the last she would produce as her co-producer Ms. Scoggin was retiring from the field. Understandable, as this session would be hard to top.

Kasia Solon Cristobal is Student Services Coordinator, Tarlton Law Library, The University of Texas School of Law

FROM THE HARVARD LAW SCHOOL LIBRARY:

Women at HLS: 60 Years of Transformation

Historical & Special Collections is pleased to announce that its new exhibit, Women at HLS: 60 Years of Transformation, is on view in the library’s Caspersen Room from now until December 13, 2013.

Since women were first admitted to HLS in 1950, female students have slowly but surely carved out a place for themselves on campus. Sixty years of female graduates have transformed the HLS campus and student life. As enrollment of women in incoming classes grew slowly from 2.5% of the first entering class to 48% of the Class of 2015, female students have had an effect on the classroom, in student organizations, and in public life beyond HLS.

The exhibit explores themes such as enrollment, sports and recreation, campus improvements, and student organizations – particularly the Women’s Law Association (WLA). It draws on Historical & Special Collections’ Photographs of HLS Students collection and the recently processed Red Set Ephemera collection. Jane Kelly and Margaret Peachy curated Women at HLS, which will be on view in the Caspersen Room Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM through December 13, 2013.

Treasures from Historical & Special Collections

You are invited to visit the Library’s Caspersen Room in Langdell Hall to see some of Historical & Special Collections’ most special treasures, on view through November 22. Eight beautiful and historically significant items await you in the glass cases at the front of the room, including:

The Library’s oldest European manuscript, Gratian’s Decretum. Our copy was written around 1160 AD.

A very early and very portable Magna Carta, written around 1300. Our copy was intended to be slipped into a lawyer's sleeve and carried about on business.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Junior’s own copy of his first edition of The Common Law, which he annotated to prepare the second edition.

A deed, dated 1408, featuring a well-preserved Great Seal of Henry IV in wax.

FROM THE WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW LIBRARY

Bob’s World
The Story of Bob, the WVU Law School Mascot, 1905 - 1910
Bob, the beloved pet and constant companion of Prof. William P. Willey, one of WVU’s first law professors and founder of the West Virginia Law Review (1895), was more than one man’s best friend. Bob was known and loved by every law student at West Virginia University College of Law. Considered by both faculty and students as the Law School’s Mascot, Bob faithfully attended every class and lecture with his master from 1905 to his tragic death by poisoning in 1910. The Fall 2013 exhibition, *Bob’s World*, will focus on Bob and the world he knew at WVU.

*Bob’s World* captures a very rich time in the early history of the WVU College of Law when classes were held in Woodburn Hall, the University’s flagship building, also housing the law library, and taught by noted professors St. George Tucker Brooke, William P. Willey, Dean Charles Hogg, author of *Hogg’s Pleading and Forms*, and Uriah Barnes, author of the groundbreaking *Barnes Federal Code*.

Contact Stewart Plein ([Stewart.Plein@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Stewart.Plein@mail.wvu.edu)) for more information.

*Bob, at the feet of his owner, Prof. William P. Willey, poses with the Junior Law class of 1909.*

**Member News**

Mike Widener

Congratulations to all of the LHRB-SIS members who earned awards at the 2013 AALL annual meeting. They are (in alphabetical order):

**Michael Chiorazzi** (University of Arizona Law Library), whose lecture was entitled “Training the Next Generation of Law Librarians – The Past as Prologue.”

The *AALL Spectrum* Article of the Year Award to **Laurel Davis** (Boston College Law Library) for “Rare Books & Technology: Collaborating Within the Library,” *AALL Spectrum* (Sept./Oct. 2012).

The RIPS-SIS Annual Meeting Grant to **Edward Hart** and **Avery Le** (both from the University of Florida Law Library).

The Joseph L. Andrews Bibliographical Award “for a significant contribution to legal bibliographical literature” to **Douglas Lind** (Southern Illinois University Law Library), for *Lincoln’s Suspension of


Also worthy of mention here is the Law Library Publications Award: Nonprint Division, to the Cornell Law Library for “Cornell Law Library Trial Pamphlets Collection.”

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Paul Pruitt (University of Alabama Law Library) has published “Scalawag Dreams: Elisha Wolsey Peck’s Career, and Two of His Speeches, 1867-1869,” 66 Alabama Review 211 (July 2013).

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Stewart Plein (West Virginia University Law Library) attended the Rare Book School course, “Provenance: Tracing Owners and Collections,” July 29-Aug. 2, 2013, at the University of Virginian. This course looked at the evidence of previous ownership in books and how they were used, read, and circulated by their readers.

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The homicide rate in the United States has always been high and remains two and half times higher “...than any other affluent democracy” (p. 4). Discovering the cause of the high homicide rate is a question of urgent concern. In *American Homicide*, Randolph Roth, professor of history and sociology, has researched the problem of the high homicide rate in the United States through a historical analysis of the records documenting individual homicides. Roth hypothesized that the high homicide rate in the United States follows a consistent pattern that began in the pre-colonial era and has persisted. To further support his claims, Roth has included information documenting his sources and research methods.

Roth is keenly aware that his hypothesis does not fall within the stereotypical reasons posited for violence in American society and stated, "It will become evident that homicide rates among adults are not determined by proximate causes such as poverty, drugs, unemployment, alcohol, race, or ethnicity, but by factors that seem on the face of it to be impossibly remote, like the feelings that people have toward their government, the degree to which they identify with members of their own communities, and the opportunities they have to earn respect without resorting to violence. History holds the key to understanding why the United States is so homicidal today" (p. 3). Based on his analysis, Roth posits:

“Four similar correlations emerge from an examination of homicide rates in parts of the United States and Western Europe throughout the past four centuries:

1. The belief that government is stable and that its legal and judicial institutions are unbiased and will redress wrongs and protect lives and property.
2. A feeling of trust in government and the officials who run it, and a belief in their legitimacy.
3. Patriotism, empathy, and fellow feeling arising from racial, religious, or political solidarity.
4. The belief that the social hierarchy is legitimate, that one’s position in society is or can be satisfactory and that one can command the respect of others without resorting to violence.”

(pp. 17-18). Roth argued in support of his hypothesis using evidence from hundreds of individual homicide cases. He charted changes in rates and patterns of homicide through the lens of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and geography, creating an intricate pattern not of connection, but of disharmony in the history and contemporary society of the United States.

Roth’s analysis of homicide patterns is careful to distinguish homicide as killings that occur between unrelated adults and are not as a result of war or conflict. By doing so, Roth was able to focus on what we might currently refer to as “random acts of violence.” As might be expected, Roth was able to document that killers are almost always men. Even so, the patterns that are revealed in the circumstances in which women killed are fascinating. This gender analysis shows that
women were most likely to kill a spouse or master/mistress in an indentured servitude arrangement. As with war, he separately addressed domestic killings which were spousal homicides, romance homicides, or other homicides where the victim and killer were related in some way. Interestingly, the rate of spousal homicide spiked when handguns become widely available. Prior to that time, a woman who died at the hands of a spouse usually died from injuries sustained from physical abuse. As ownership of handguns increased, so did the rate of spousal homicide and, more specifically, homicide by gunshot. (Child murder is not addressed in this volume and will be the subject of a future book.)

Roth analyzed homicides chronologically from pre-colonial times to the present. Within each era of consideration, significant differences in homicide rates due to race, religion, ethnicity, and geography were discussed and placed in a historical and political context. In each era, one can clearly see social factors that affected how individuals felt and interacted with their contemporaries, and how those interactions could be dysfunctional and lead to homicide. Tracking the homicide rates of African Americans and Native Americans is particularly interesting, especially how those rates did and continue to differ in geographic areas of the United States. The stability of the rates and patterns of homicide in the United States since 1900 is remarkable itself and worthy of further analysis as records become available.

Roth asserts that the data necessary for an analysis of the twentieth century homicides rates, in order to complete an analysis comparable to that of the previous centuries, is currently unavailable. Nonetheless, he asserts that the pattern is clear to see. After reading historical accounts that support his hypothesis, one can clearly see how those same factors are influencing our current state of politics and homicide patterns in the United States. At times, one might have to refer to the name of the chapter to be certain of the time period under discussion because the patterns are so consistent across time and clearly visible in the present day. Roth’s statement, “There was little to bind Americans together when their sense of political kinship failed” (p. 23) is particularly concerning in today’s political climate. One feels a sense of urgency in finding solutions to bring Americans together with a sense of community and faith in government.

Although Roth affirmed that solutions may not be self-evident, he believes that his analysis of the causes and patterns of homicides may inform change in a positive way. One cannot help but be excited at the idea that with the discovery of a clear pattern for high homicide rates, solutions can be developed and implemented. After reading this book, one will see the pattern in every homicide and consider what could have been different that would have prevented the murder. This book is highly recommended for a wide audience including scholars, sociologists, and, perhaps most importantly, the politicians who could be working to foster political unity. This book gives one hope that someday, the United States will be known as a peaceful country instead of a violent country.

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