



The Magic Mirror: Law in American History

Kermit L. Hall

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Chronicling American law from its English origins to the present, and offering for the first time comprehensive coverage of twentieth-century developments, this book sets American law and legal institutions in the broad context of social, economic, and political events, weaving together themes from the history of both public and private law. A history of law in action, *The Magic Mirror* treats law in society, and the legal implications of social change in areas such as criminal justice, the rights of women, blacks, the family, and children. It further examines regional differences in American legal culture, the creation of the administrative and security states, the development of American federalism, and the rise of the legal profession. Hall pays close attention to the evolution of substantive law categories--such as contracts, torts, negotiable instruments, real property, trusts and estates, and civil procedure--and addresses the intellectual evolution of American law, surveying movements such as legal realism and critical legal studies. Hall concludes that over its history American law has been remarkably fluid, adapting in form and substance to each successive generation without ever fully resolving the underlying social and economic conflicts that provoke demands for legal change. The book's organization reflects typical course structure and its style is clear and accessible to students, making it the ideal text for the study of American legal history at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

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