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## Writing the Legal Record: Law Reporters in Nineteenth-Century Kentucky

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Research Libraries, the 2014 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Education Facility Design Award, the 2014 American Library Association (ALA) Library Interior Design Award, and the 2013 AIA/ALA Building Award for distinguished accomplishment in library architecture. It was also named a *Library Journal* New Landmark Library in 2016.

In addition to the long list of Hunt Library honors, Nutter has also garnered the triple crown of national libraries awards during her tenure, being named the 2016 Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Academic/Research Librarian of the Year and the 2005 *Library Journal* “Librarian of the Year,” and leading the first university library to win the ACRL “Excellence in Academic Libraries Award” in 2000. Last spring, Nutter accepted the IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service on the Libraries’ behalf from First Lady Michelle Obama in a White House ceremony. While Nutter’s legacy will be her embrace of emerging technologies and innovative scholarship, it is her ability to connect with and listen to students, alumni, faculty, and administrators that has enabled that legacy. Few college students or faculty elsewhere know the name of their library’s director, but that has never been the case at NC State. Throughout Nutter’s career, students have marveled at the Libraries’ response to their suggestions and requests. High-tech innovations and minor conveniences alike have been achieved because of Nutter’s focus on creating a user-centered library for the university community.

Nutter received her Bachelor of Arts in American Literature from Colby College in 1966 and her Master of Science in Library Science from Boston’s Simmons College in 1968. She served as Associate Director of Libraries for Collection Management and Technical Services at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where she was a founding staff member of Project INTREX, an experimental information storage and retrieval system that foresaw how the digital age would transform scholarship and librarianship.

Nutter has also served as the Association of Research Libraries president, currently serves on the association’s steering committee and is a founder of North Carolina Libraries for Virtual Education (NC LIVE), an unparalleled public-private venture that places a virtual library within the reach of every one of North Carolina’s more than 10 million residents. Nutter is also a member of the Governing Board of the Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN).

She was honored as one of six foundation members of the Zeta of North Carolina Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa when the chapter was installed at NC State, and she was awarded an Alumni Achievement Award from the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Writing the Legal Record: Law Reporters in Nineteenth-Century Kentucky.** Kurt X. Metzmeier. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-8131-6860-9. 211p. \$50.

# WRITING *the* LEGAL RECORD



LAW REPORTERS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY KENTUCKY

KURT X. METZMEIER

*Writing the Legal Record* documents how the Kentucky legislature first addressed the task of creating incentives to ensure quality legal case reporting. The book examines the politics involved in even appointing a court reporter—as the Kentucky legislature passed a law creating the position of Court of Appeals reporter—a paid position appointed by the Governor and approved by the senate in 1815.

The court reporting system, at least in Kentucky, had the Senate specified page length and paper quality. The Kentucky legislature also “directed that the reporter omit the arguments of counsel ‘in all cases.’” Those chosen to do court reporting were called “nominative” reporters as the reports were named after the reporters themselves.

Court reporters were influential themselves in Kentucky law and politics, as many reporters were prominent attorneys, law professors, and sitting or retired judges of some of the Kentucky’s highest courts. Women and African Americans were excluded from the legal system and also excluded from law reporting as well.

Metzmeier, the associate director of the Brandeis School of Law and an attorney, examines the minutiae of the efforts that went into keeping legal records alive for attorneys and the public at large. His text documents how politics would sometimes get court reporter removed from their position if the reporter’s legal work was in opposition to the will of the Kentucky senate. Yet other court reporters were wealthy and owned their own slaves.

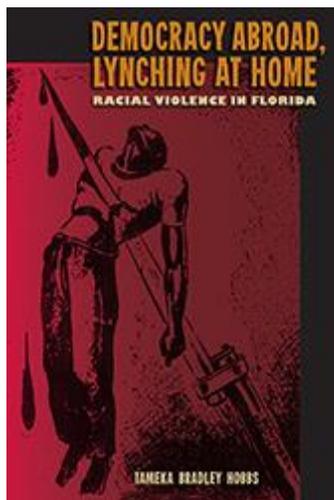
Metzmeier in his research reveals the political dangers of being both a court reporter and a lawyer. Some court reporters, like William Littell, wrote documents that not only rankled people in power but hurt his own reporting career. Littell petitioned the Kentucky house of representatives to pass a law that would allow women to divorce men who were guilty of abandonment, adultery, or physical cruelty. Littell's bill failed, yet he fought back by decrying the use of slaves as prostitutes, which violated the "code of silence" concerning sexual violence against slaves by slave owners.

The book notes how the Kentucky legislature eliminated the court reporter position in 1878. National and regional court reporters filled the necessity of covering new kinds of litigation that was inadvertently created by the rise of factory, railroad and "big capital" in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In all, 13 court reporters are profiled covering a period of almost 100 years of court reporting. Metzmeier briefly refers to how online legal research now delegates the court reporters of years past to the "occasional footnote" in a case. The reporters, who gave all the coverage on other people's court dramas, have had little coverage of their own efforts to preserve the written legal word so other attorneys didn't have to spend hours in a court clerk's office.

Though Metzmeier's book is at times dry and technical, it writes about the important, sometimes mundane writing that doesn't generate gratitude from its readers, yet served an invaluable service at the time. This book is strongly recommended.

*Peter R. Dean*  
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**Democracy Abroad, Lynching at Home, Racial Violence in Florida.** Tameka Bradley Hobbs, Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 2015. 978-0-8130-6104-7 (hardcover) \$74.95; 978-0-8130-6239-6 (pbk.) \$24.95. 288 p.



Tameka Bradley Hobbs draws upon highly personal experiences to take us into her historical research of criminality surrounding lynching of black men in the state of Florida. While an undergraduate at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, listening to a lecture on racial violence in Florida, her professor asked her, "I'll bet you didn't know they lynched a boy in Live Oak".

Hobbs explains she was astounded by this comment as she had not discussed race relations in her home town with her family. She sought to learn more about the lynching from her grandfather on her next trip home. She learned Willie James Howard was hanged with his hands and feet bound, and suspended from a tree branch by a sheet that was tied around his neck. Grandfather Reverend Freeman Grimme, Jr., recalled for her his feelings on the hanging, "Yeah, baby, I remember when they killed that boy...I remember in those days, when I'd go into town, if I even saw a white woman walking my way, I'd turn around and go home" (p. xiii).

Lynching of a black man for accusations that he had somehow sexually interacted with a white girl or woman became the way in which "extralegal murder" was somehow justified. Hobbs points out that the focus of her study "is to provide a detailed analysis of ... lynchings that took place during the 1940s". She goes on to say, "by the 1950s, nearly 5,000 people, primarily black men living in the South lost their lives at the hands of white vigilantes". (p. 4) Additionally though the Jim Crow laws enacted in many southern states were to separate white and black citizens and ease some tensions, these laws achieved the opposite effect. Suppressing voice for black people and giving enforcement powers to local officials led to more heated anger and uprisings and riots.

Hobbs writing style borders on a clearly absorbing storytelling mode. It challenges the reader to look away from horrific descriptions of lynching and related body mutilation and torture while immediately resuming the story she is telling.

Poignantly so, the book's title "Democracy Abroad, Lynching at Home, Racial Violence in Florida" is a perfect choice for Hobbs' research. The setting in the 1940s and 1950s in the "south", particularly Florida, was a racist culture filled with abuse and neglect of black people and power centered in the hands of white supremacists. While abroad, World War I and World War II raged under the banner of "freedom for all people" no matter their race, color, national origin, or national allegiance. Hobbs sees the inconsistency in these professed national policies.

This book is a "must" purchase for a collection in academic libraries and public libraries. With its 227 pages, a Notes section on page 221, a Bibliography on page 251 and an Index on page 265, it provides rich detail and figures for students and researchers.