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Keeping Up with New Legal Titles

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Keeping Up with New Legal Titles*

Compiled by Benjamin J. Keele** and Nick Sexton***

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* The works reviewed in this issue were published in 2014 and 2015. If you would like to review books for “Keeping Up with New Legal Titles,” please send an e-mail to bkeele@indiana.edu and nsexton@email.unc.edu.

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Reviewed by Alison P. Sherwin*  

¶1 As a law student who took her “gentleman’s B” in constitutional law more than ten years ago and breathed a huge sigh of relief from that accomplishment, I have to admit some trepidation toward reviewing a book containing glowing blurbs from, among others, professors Laurence Tribe and Steve Calabresi. Constitutional law is full of inside-baseball jargon and three-part tests. It is not an area of law that a general reader (or a first-year law student) can necessarily understand with ease. How would a book covering such a dense topic, but also intended to reach the general reader, work? With such concerns in mind, I began to read.  

¶2 *The Law of the Land: A Grand Tour of Our Constitutional Republic* is the third in a series of books about the Constitution that Akhil Reed Amar has written to appeal to more than just the law student or academic. Along with *America’s Unwritten Constitution: The Precedents and Principles We Live By*, and *America’s Constitution: A Biography*, *The Law of the Land* “aims to give general readers a pan-

be and less time discussing what it actually is. An ideal audience for this book would perhaps be undergraduate journalism or philosophy students who are interested in ethical issues. As such, this book would be better suited for a general academic library collection than for a law library. Law students looking for an involved discussion of the current state of privacy law, free speech law, or a detailed suggestion for policy reform will want to look elsewhere.


Reviewed by Patty Alvayay*

$75 As a technical services librarian, I dreaded the thought of reading a book titled *Rethinking Library Technical Services: Redefining Our Profession for the Future.* Books of this nature often come across as a defense of the existence of technical services instead of a critical discussion of what technical services ought to be and how we should shape that future. However, I was pleasantly surprised that this book focuses much more on the latter than the former and that it presents progressive ideas for what technical services could be.

$76 For example, the chart on page xi showing the configuration of technical services at individual libraries provides good insight into how libraries are changing technical services to fit their individual needs and goals. Michel Luesebrink’s chapter, “Restructuring Monograph Acquisitions in Academic Libraries,” is particularly insightful about the academic library’s transition from a library-centric approach to a user-centric approach regarding acquisitions. I would also recommend this chapter for library directors wanting to restructure the duties of acquisitions librarians to include demand-driven methodologies. While each chapter centers on a different topic relating to technical services, they are all worth a read, and I would recommend this book to any technical services librarians whose positions are focused on a specific skill but who are looking to step outside of that skill. I also recommend the book to library directors interested in gaining a better understanding of technical services or who want to reconfigure the department to better fit the library’s overall mission.

$77 Another useful aspect of the book is that in several chapters the authors bring up the skills a technical services librarian should have in today’s library environment. These skills are sometimes overlooked in entry-level job postings, such as being able to effectively manage an integrated library system, having basic knowledge of old cataloging standards to “manipulate legacy data” (p.149), and possessing a basic understanding of programming. In Amy Weiss’s chapter, “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do,” she points out that “rather than vanishing, technical services work has melded into other parts of the library and beyond” (p.148), and that a “technical services librarian could be working in special collections, access services, technology, or a hybrid department” (p.149). Weiss illustrates that while an autonomous technical services department may not be the future of a library organization, the skills of a technical services librarian will always be needed.

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¶78 Rethinking Library Technical Services, however, is not a detailed manual on how to change your technical services department. Most chapters focus on a single issue, ranging from linked data to acquisitions to ever-changing cataloging standards, providing details on how certain changes can make your technical services department more effective. Of course, every library has a different departmental structure, and some of these ideas may not be feasible for bureaucratic or budgetary reasons. Also, a couple of the chapters may be difficult for those not well versed in current events in the technical services world. However, the book offers good examples of what libraries have done with their technical services departments, conveys the truth of the statement "that librarians [today], technical services librarians in particular, are standing on shifting sands" (p.10), and emphasizes that following old standards can be detrimental to the library as a whole.


Reviewed by Miriam A. Murphy*

¶79 Nancy Woloch has created an in-depth study of the development and decline of sex-specific protective labor laws in the United States over the passage of a century. Her central thesis is that while initially viewed as beneficial to women, protective labor laws were later viewed as discriminatory and in competition with the newer concept of labor equality for women. As with any evolving area of the law, changes do not occur in a smooth progression, with one event following neatly on the heels of its predecessor. Woloch does a remarkable job of pulling a wide array of disparate events together to form a single narrative supporting her central theme.

¶80 Each chapter starts with a photo and quotation from a woman affected by the labor situation of the time. Advocates for change, such as Florence Kelley of the National Consumers' League and Alice Paul of the National Women's Party, are followed in depth through their careers. The stories of many other leaders, including Louis D. Brandeis, Felix Frankfurter, and Eleanor Roosevelt, are also told, providing a rich historical texture. The clear descriptions of the motivations of participants have the feel of modern news reports. Woloch carefully interweaves the human stories of the participants with the intricate trail of legal and social progress. This personalization helps give the recital of legislation and litigation a narrative style that steeps the reader in the history and mindset of the moment.

¶81 Woloch explores judicial and legislative successes and failures. The protectionist movement started with the goal of limiting work hours and improving conditions for all workers. Reformers promoted sex-specific legislation for two reasons. The first was pragmatic, assuming easier legislative approval; the second was to use women's protections as an "entering wedge" on which rights for all workers could be built. Pivotal cases focused on the tension between labor interference and protectionist health law in state labor legislation. The cornerstone arguments