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Roger H. Wolcott

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An Old Reading Course

AN OLD READING COURSE

By ROGER H. WOLCOTT, *Esq.*

Dean Denver University Law School

ABOUT thirty years ago the advice of Mr. Joel F. Vaile of Denver was asked as to a course of reading to be recommended for a law student. Mr. Vaile smiled, and produced from a file a list of books intended for the reading of law clerks preparing themselves for bar admission through study in law offices.

The list had come into Mr. Vaile's hands in Ohio some twenty-five or thirty years before, too late to form the basis of his own legal study, but its completeness had appealed to him so that he had saved it. At the end of the list appeared the following notation: "The student who has completed this course will be able to select for himself such additional reading as will be required for his further professional advancement." Mr. Vaile laughingly remarked that he could endorse that much of the document without hesitation.

The list is herewith reprinted with no addition except for indicating in parentheses some of the chapter headings in Kent's Commentaries:

COURSE OF READING—RECOMMENDED TO STUDENTS AT LAW

1. Cooley's Blackstone
2. First thirty-three chapters of Kent. (Law of Nations, 9 chapters; U. S. Government and Constitution, 10 chapters; Sources of Law, 4 chapters; Rights of Persons, 9 chapters; Corporations, 1 chapter)
3. Schouler on Domestic Relations
4. Angell and Ames on Corporations, or Grant
5. Kent, Chapters 34 to 39 inclusive (Personal Property, 5 chapters; Contracts, 1 chapter)
6. Parsons on Contracts
7. Kent, Chapter 40 (Bailments)
8. Edwards or Story on Bailments
9. Kent, Chapter 41 (Principal and Agent)
10. Story on Agency
11. Kent, Chapters 42 and 43 (Maritime Law, Partnership)
12. Parsons, Lindley, or Collyer on Partnership
13. Kent, Chapter 44 (Negotiable Paper)
14. Edwards or Parsons on Bills
15. Kent, Chapters 45 to 49 inclusive (Maritime Law)

16. Parsons or Smith on Mercantile Law
17. Kent, Chapter 50 to the end. (Insurance, 1 chapter; Real Property, 18 chapters)
18. Williams on Real Property
19. Washburn on Real Property
20. Bishop on Marriage and Divorce
21. Stephen or Gould on Pleading
22. Starkie on Evidence, or Greenleaf Volume I
23. Adams' Equity, or Story's Equity Jurisprudence
24. Bishop's Criminal Law
25. Bishop's Criminal Procedure
26. Cooley on Constitutional Limitations
27. Story on the Constitution
28. Wheaton's International Law
29. Williams on Personal Property
30. Hashburn on Easements
31. Redfield on Railways
32. Addison on Torts
33. Redfield on Wills
34. Parsons' Maritime Law
35. Story's Conflict of Laws
36. Story's Equity Pleading

Lest the course should appear short, it may be remarked that Cooley's Blackstone contains 480 pages, the first thirty-three chapters of Kent's Commentaries 849 pages, the 1870 edition of Schouler's Domestic Relations 647 pages, and the 1875 edition of Angell and Ames on Corporations 826 pages. It seems safe to estimate that the course as a whole covers well over 20,000 pages of reading. At the rate of eight pages per hour this would mean 2,500 hours of reading, or even at 10 pages an hour it would mean 2,000 hours. If a student were to digest the material, copying his digest into notebooks as he went along and reading an occasional case cited in the text, it may be doubted if he could maintain either of these rates of speed. The typical present day law school course embraces from 1,200 to 1,500 hours of class sessions, with some larger number of hours spent in preparation—presumably.

In the days when Sholes was perfecting his design for a typewriter, the machine which played such a large part in doing away with the apprenticeship method of law study, law clerks doubtless used to compare notes and exchange reading lists. Mr. Vaile must have had opportunity to see many such

lists, and the one here given is of interest as impressing him more favorably than some of the other lists.

It seems safe to say that the candidate for the bar who actually completed the faithful reading of such a list certainly demonstrated at least two of the qualities desirable for the lawyer—interest in the law, and perseverance.. Also, whether or not he received the training in legal reasoning which is attributed to the case method of study, his acquaintance with the subject matter of practically the whole field of law must have been deserving of respect.

YOUR BANQUET COMMITTEE SPEAKS!

AS CHAIRMAN of the Banquet Committee it has occurred to me that it would be a fine thing if we could have an old-fashioned get-together smoker at some convenient place this fall, at which not only every member of the Association but every Denver lawyer will be invited and expected to be present regardless of wealth, health or previous condition of servitude. We have noticed at our Bar Association luncheons many new faces, and we do not feel that we know half the men who are present, or even that they are lawyers, except that they are present at a lawyers' luncheon.

This lack of acquaintanceship tends to breed offishness and embarrassment, whereas the lawyers of any community should be bound together with a feeling of comradeship and fellowship, with their mutual interests and problems. Therefore, if the Denver Bar Association, or rather all lawyers, whether members of the Association or not, had two or three functions in Denver such as the summer picnic, at which they could all come—for a reasonable fee—without being faced with any propaganda or speeches, but only to have a good time and to meet each other and get acquainted, it would be invaluable to the spirit of the Denver Bar. Certainly the lawyers should be as well acquainted with each other as the doctors become through their medical associations or the men in the various service clubs and Chamber of Commerce, and yet I do not believe that this is the fact.