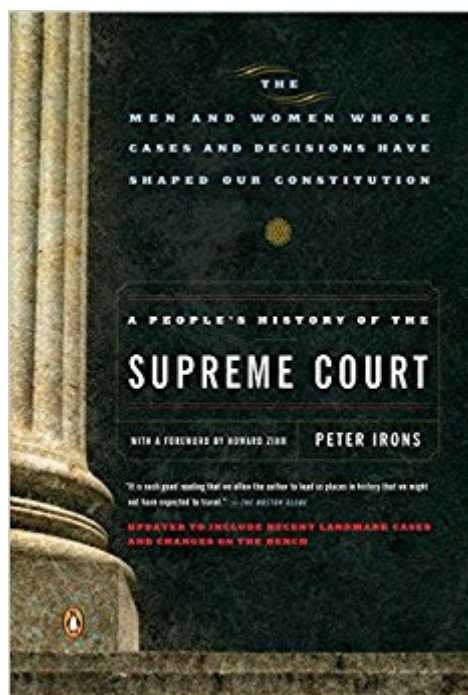


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A People's History Of The Supreme Court: The Men And Women Whose Cases And Decisions Have Shaped Our Constitution: Revised Edition



Synopsis

A comprehensive history of the people and cases that have changed history, this is the definitive account of the nation's highest court. Recent changes in the Supreme Court have placed the venerable institution at the forefront of current affairs, making this comprehensive and engaging work as timely as ever. In the tradition of Howard Zinn's classic *A People's History of the United States*, Peter Irons chronicles the decisions that have influenced virtually every aspect of our society, from the debates over judicial power to controversial rulings in the past regarding slavery, racial segregation, and abortion, as well as more current cases about school prayer, the Bush/Gore election results, and "enemy combatants." To understand key issues facing the supreme court and the current battle for the court's ideological makeup, there is no better guide than Peter Irons. This revised and updated edition includes a foreword by Howard Zinn. "A sophisticated narrative history of the Supreme Court . . . [Irons] breathes abundant life into old documents and reminds readers that today's fiercest arguments about rights are the continuation of the endless American conversation." -Publisher's Weekly (starred review)

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Customer Reviews

The savvy, chatty author of *The Courage of Their Convictions* brings us a scholarly reckoning of the 200-plus years of decisions made by the highest court in the land. Not surprisingly (and justifiably, given his erudite arguments), Peter H. Irons represents the court's work as a never-ending appeal of the powerless to the powerful: of the just over 100 supreme justices who have sat on the court, all but two have been white, all but two have been men, and all but seven have been Christian,

whereas the supplicants to our nation's highest bar are typically racial minorities, women, and deviants in some way from the religious and social mainstream. Taking a representative (if not comprehensive) accounting of the Supreme Court's most significant decisions, Irons puts cultural and political context--and a human face--to the parties involved, painting an absorbing and involving picture of landmark cases that readers are likely to recall but not fully understand. Whether he's explicating the tortuous history of freedom-seeking slave Dred Scott or explaining the "a Jap's a Jap" reasoning behind the legal exculpation of World War II internment camps, Irons reminds us of the court's spotted history while still conveying the deep affection he has for it. (Includes a thoughtful appendix with the complete text of the Constitution and suggestions for further reading.) --Paul Hughes --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Presenting a sophisticated narrative history of the Supreme Court, Irons (*The Courage of Their Convictions*, etc.) illustrates the beguiling legacy left by the Constitution's framers, who conjured up the high Court without providing an instruction manual. Irons is clear about where his ideological sympathy lies, calling Justice William Brennan "my judicial ideal and inspiration" and quoting Brennan's famous formulation that "the genius of the Constitution" rests in "the adaptability of its great principles to cope with current problems and current needs." Irons traces the development of the Court's peculiar institutional workings from its first proceedings under Chief Justice John Jay to the struggle for individual liberties during the successive Warren, Burger and Rehnquist Courts. In characterizing the Court as a bastion of racism, classism and sexism prior to Earl Warren's ascendancy, he often tends to use extended arguments when quick jabs would suffice. But as he delves into the personalities of litigants, justices and senators (who, as far back as 1831, fought fiercely over the confirmations of Supreme Court nominees), Irons proves himself a master of American legal and political history. He is particularly lucid when recounting how Reconstruction reforms, such as the Fourteenth Amendment, that were intended to ensure the liberties of individuals were co-opted by the Gilded Age Court to protect the liberties of business. Irons combines careful research with a populist passion. In doing so, he breathes abundant life into old documents and reminds readers that today's fiercest arguments about rights are the continuation of the endless American conversation. BOMC selection. (Aug.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A well written and engaging book. There's an unabashedly leftish leaning but there's no effort or intent to distort so suitable across the political spectrum. But! The book is full of unforgivable typos

and they are far too frequent, at least one per page, to allow a smooth and pleasant read. Penguin should be very embarrassed to have its name on this product.

This is an excellent book which starts out during the making of the Constitution and then goes into detail the role of the Supremes in this nations history regarding the more important cases the Court decided. It mentions all the justices and their role in the Court, whether their impact was breathtaking, or non-existent (which happened more often then anyone might think). My only complaint is that the book, published in 1999, is not up to date with the times (obviously). What would Irons have to say about the last decade, or for that matter, the controversial Bush vs. Gore.

I got this book for a class in college and I completely thought that the men and women put on the Supreme Court were intelligent, thoughtful, fair and able to suspend themselves from society in order to have an unbiased opinion on the decisions that affect the whole country...Holy crap was I wrong.It's a fun read, although dense at times but it covers the cases, the histories of those cases, the people serving on the Supreme court, and their histories, during that decision and the surrounding context of the nation in general. It was quite entertaining and mind blowing knowing that some of the people that served on the Supreme Court system were poor, not lawyers, some were certifiably insane, picked on party lines only, and in some decisions went against the obvious answer and changed history and facts to justify their own personal feeling in their decisions.If you have ever thought that the Supreme court system was noble or the people who were on it were the cream of the crop from law backgrounds; you need to read this book.

A detailed history of the people, their interactions, and the legal legacy of the Supreme Court. Interesting to read and very informative about the role the Supreme Court and individual justices have played in molding national beliefs about US diversity and culture over the years.

Amazing read with unique historical insight into our nation's development as seen through the eyes of those that helped craft, and subsequently define, portions of the constitution. You won't find this information in high school text books.

the book itself is good and thorough. the kindle edition is FULL of typos. Very irritating

The first half is kind of hard to read, but the second half is quite interesting. It's great to learn about

our history and see how things really aren't much different than they are now.

This is a very good and comprehensive book.

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