



# The Supreme Court of Florida and Its Predecessor Courts, 1821-1917

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"I highly recommend this book to all members of the bench and bar. . . . [It] would have been of immense value to me as a lawyer, attorney general, and supreme court justice. It historically depicts in flesh-and-blood images the litigators and jurists who participated in formulating the rules of law that govern in Florida today."--Richard W. Ervin, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Florida, 1969-1971

"This major and outstanding work . . . establishes a lofty standard for state high court histories."--Stephen C. O'Connell, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Florida, 1967; president of the University of Florida, 1967-73

"A thoughtful, meticulously researched examination of the Florida judicial system's evolution."--Kenneth W. Starr, solicitor general of the United States, 1989-1993

This is the first in-depth history of the Florida territorial courts, the Supreme Court of Florida, and the judges of both from 1821 to 1917, the golden age of state constitutional law.

The Supreme Court of Florida and its territorial predecessors often were at the center of leading political, social, and economic controversies. By examining the court's opinions on issues such as slavery, internal improvements, and business regulation, the authors reveal the way the court shaped and was shaped by the competing interests that transformed Florida. Court efforts at the same time to define the scope of each branch of government reveal the ways that political power influenced the court's work.

Virtually all jurists on the appellate courts during the era held other prominent positions in business or government. The biographies of these men--usually the most extensive accounts ever written--include their background and accomplishments as well as weaknesses, and demonstrate that their political and legal philosophies often overlapped significantly.

The book presents the facts of such controversial issues as the court's role in Florida's political Redemption after the Civil War and its efforts to ensure access to the court system by African-Americans. At a time when the courts are poised to assume greater responsibilities, this work reveals the challenges faced by an earlier court in arbitrating constitutional struggles over power and liberty.

Walter W. Manley, II, professor of business administration at Florida State University, has been a visiting professor at Oxford and Cambridge universities. He is the author of five books, including *Critical Issues in Business Conduct: Legal, Ethical and Social Challenges for the 1990s*.

E. Canter Brown, Jr., historian in residence at the Tampa Bay History Center, is the author of numerous books, including *Ossian Bingley Hart, Florida's Loyalist Reconstruction Governor* and *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (UPF, 1991).

Eric W. Rise, assistant professor of criminal justice at the University of Delaware, is the author of several books, including *The Martinsville Seven: Race, Rape, and Capital Punishment*.

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