

User-Friendly Year Books

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I propose a paper for the ASLH meeting at Dallas in November 2009 a paper to be delivered in conjunction with one from Prof. Robert Palmer of the University of Houston. Prof. Palmer has an Anglo-American Legal Tradition website on which he has made available images of the medieval and early modern English Plea Rolls, the official Latin manuscript records of litigation in the principle royal courts of justice in England. I have compiled a database, an Index and Paraphrase of Printed Year Books, 1268-1535, on which I have created records for every printed Year Book case, law reports written in law French by lawyers present in courts, recording dialogue between lawyers and judges. My database has more than 22,000 records indexing Year Book cases under about 40 headings, and the records are linked to the relevant images in a recently reprinted Vulgate edition of the early printed Year Books. My Year Book cases contain the back-and-forth of legal arguments, which is left out of Palmer's Plea Roll material. His records contain the actual names of the parties and the results of cases, most of which are missing in my Year Book cases, so the two resources complement each other. I will adapt my presentation to coordinate with Palmer's, but would expect to talk about the choices I have made to standardize some features of the year Book reports, omit others, and highlight still others in my database. I should have reached the last Year Book report in the chronological series by next November, which would make it a fitting time for me to report my progress.

David J. Seipp
brief biographical information

David Seipp has the A.B. in History from Harvard College summa cum laude, the B.A. in Jurisprudence from Merton College Oxford, the LL.B. from St. John's College Cambridge with first class honours, and the J.D. from Harvard Law School magna cum laude. He was an editor of the Harvard law Review, clerked for Judge Henry J. Friendly on the Second Circuit, and was an associate at the Boston firm of Foley, Hoag & Eliot before joining the faculty of Boston University School of Law. There, Seipp was an Associate Professor from 1986 to 1992, during which he was awarded a John M. Olin Faculty Fellowship, and has been a Professor of Law since 1992, most recently named a Law Alumni Scholar. He has written numerous articles on various aspects of the early common law, as well as on the jurisprudence of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. For the past nine years, he has been compiling a free publicly accessible research database on printed Year Book reports from 1268 to 1535, which is at <http://www.bu.edu/law/seipp>. He is a member of the Selden Society and the American Law Institute, is a director of the Ames Foundation, and has served on and chaired various committee of the American Society for Legal History, elected to the nominating committee and board of directors in past years.

Robert Palmer

Robert C. Palmer is the Cullen Professor of History and Law at the University of Houston, a joint appointment between the History Department and the Law Center. He has published five research monographs, including *English Law in the Age of the Black Death* and *Selling the Church*. He teaches in the areas of English and American legal history and Trusts and Wills. He is the developer and administrator of the Anglo-American Legal Tradition website (<http://aalt.law.uh.edu>) at the O'Quinn Law Library that provides free access to more than 3,000,000 digitized images of U.K. National Archives documents.