

## Abstract

Why did the United States Supreme Court break from a long established tradition of federalism concerns and interfere in state criminal proceedings in 1923 with the landmark case *Moore v. Dempsey*? Understudied by previous scholars, the birth of the modern criminal procedure revolution in America is an important turning point in our political and legal history. Through extensive archival research of the events surrounding *Moore*, this paper uncovers the dominant role played by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In fact, archival material reveals this case would not have reached the Supreme Court without the tremendous organizational effort on behalf of the NAACP through three major ways: (1) publicity used to raise awareness about the important issues and to galvanize public opinion, (2) fundraising to finance the lengthy litigation, and (3) experienced legal counsel who could expertly fight the case in the courtroom. In addition, this paper is revisionist in the sense that the NAACP has been almost completely ignored from accounts of the formation of modern criminal procedure. I rectify this neglect by making it a prominent part of the story.