

**Jeffrey P. Moran.** *The Scopes Trial: A Brief History with Documents.* New York: Palgrave, 2002. Pp. x, 230. Cloth, \$45.00; ISBN 0-312-29426-3. Paper, \$14.95, ISBN 0-312-24919-5.

Many teachers are aware of the Bedford Series in History and Culture, in which scholars present introductory essays about a particular historical issue, followed by a series of primary documents related to that issue. In this case, Jeffrey Moran of the University of Kansas brings his expertise to bear on the infamous Scopes Trial of 1925—the trial that riveted the nation, revealed the tectonic gaps between modernists and traditionalists in American society, and remains an essential topic in any course on U.S. history.

*The Scopes Trial* is divided into three parts. Part One (72 pages) consists of Moran's brilliantly organized introductory essay, in which he succinctly but masterfully provides the scientific, religious, and cultural background of "the monkey case," in which the state of Tennessee placed high school teacher John Scopes on trial for teaching evolution. Moran then provides a day-to-day narrative of the trial, in which he presents a nuanced portrait of William Jennings Bryan that reveals that the Great Commoner's defense of fundamentalism was not at all inconsistent with his earlier career championing democratic reforms. Moran's comprehensive essay is witty and packed with details that students will find fascinating. Incredibly, even though we all know the outcome of the case, Moran's lively prose makes the story a page-turner.

Part One goes on to analyze how the trial reflected and impacted such issues as sectionalism, urbanization, and academic freedom. *The Scopes Trial* also makes a consistent effort to demonstrate the relevance of the case to contemporary developments in race and gender relations. This is one of the more original—and welcomed—aspects of the book, and renders it applicable in a wide range of courses focusing on social and cultural history.

Part Two (97 pages) is comprised of judiciously edited transcripts of the crucial exchanges from each day of the eight-day trial. The testimony shows that the issues involved in the case were complex (and timely to this very day), and that both sides made sophisticated and persuasive arguments during the proceedings, despite the enduring legend that the Scopes trial was a straightforward melodrama in which Clarence Darrow and the forces of modernism surgically destroyed an inept Bryan and the fundamentalist horde under the pitiless Tennessee sun.

Part Three (54 pages) consists of primary sources illustrating the public's reaction to the trial as revealed by political cartoons, newspaper and magazine articles, sermons, poems, and letters. The book also includes three appendices: a Selected Bibliography, thoughtful "Questions for Consideration" (that can easily be modified to suit the purposes of individual instructors), and a chronology of events related to the trial (from the 1859 publication of *Origin of the Species* through the 1999 decision by the Kansas State Board of Education to remove evolution from the state's tests for high school students).

*The Scopes Trial* is extensive enough that instructors can mine it for lecture materials, but also short and inexpensive so that teachers of either undergraduate or AP courses can assign it as a marvelous one-week unit on the birth of modern America. In sum, Jeffrey Moran has produced a thoughtfully organized, well written, and highly useful exploration of the Scopes trial. It is a book that teachers and students will find very beneficial.

Castleton College

Jonathan P. Spiro

**Christopher M. Finan.** *Alfred E. Smith: The Happy Warrior.* New York: Hill & Wang, 2002. Pp. x, 396. Cloth, \$26.00; ISBN 0-8090-3033-0.

Recent years have seen a flurry of interest in Alfred E. Smith. First there was Robert A. Slayton's fine book, *Empire Statesman*, and now we have Christopher M. Finan's publication. Why this interest in Smith? To be sure, we have long needed a comprehensive scholarly biography, but the continuing interest in Smith stems in large part from his own qualities. In an era of plastic candidates, weak-kneed officeholders, and homogenous and pusillanimous politicians, Al Smith looks better and better. He had character. He was honest and frank. He was courageous. He was unpretentious—and *real*.

But there is more that intrigues us, for Al Smith is an enduring puzzle. How did a man raised in a machine environment become such a statesman-like governor, a leader in his state's progressive era? How did someone with Smith's baggage manage to be nominated in 1928 when his own party was deeply divided about the wisdom of such a step? Why did Smith come to oppose his former ally, Franklin D. Roosevelt? What was Smith anyway, a liberal or a conservative? It is the very elusiveness of Al Smith that brings us back to him. Challenged by his lack of reflection (and a scarcity of primary materials), we struggle to understand Smith and how he fit into his times.

For the most part, Finan rises to the challenge: His is a readable, accurate portrayal of Smith. It tells his life story well and convincingly places Smith into his world. Even if it does not break new ground or solve the mysteries of Smith's thinking and actions across the span of his career, Finan's book does provide good insights. Any student desiring a solid synthesis of Smith's life would do well to read this book, and any instructor could use it with confidence. It would be most appropriate as assigned or supplementary reading for upper-level and graduate courses in twentieth-century America, but an instructor teaching the American history survey or a course in biography could also include it as recommended reading.

I was most impressed with the sections on Smith's life before his election as governor in 1918 and during the 1930s. Finan turns the scraps of what we know about Smith's early years into a plausible story, and there is fresh information about Smith's activities during his last decade. Although Finan had a good grasp of New York