

Preface

He dated and cross-dated, pedigreed and triple-pedigreed, compared, noted, connoted, wove, strung, sorted, selected, inferred, calendared and counter-calendared for ten hours a day. And, because this sudden and new light of Love was upon him, he turned those dry bones of history and dirty records of misdeeds into things to weep or to laugh over as he pleased. His heart and soul were at the end of his pen, and they got into the ink. He was dowered with sympathy, insight, humour, and style for two hundred and thirty days and nights; and his book was a Book.

Rudyard Kipling

Historians and legal scholars have civil responsibilities to use their knowledge in such a way that others may benefit from it. Historians who are working as expert judicial witnesses engage in a controversial legal practice in order to defend their research and their historical truth. There exists an inherent strength in just historical narrative and facts, which has the power to withstand those who seek to alter the past for personal gain in the present and the future. The civil engagement through social advocacy and personal courage displayed by some historians in tobacco litigation deserves our admiration. This book seeks to incite academic and public debate on the involvement of historians in tobacco litigation. The forensic form of history represents an opportunity for historians and the legal profession to honour the truth, to defy those who threaten it, and defend those seeking it.

I plan to continue my research on forensic history under the project title “*The Judge and The Historian*”, with special attention to the involvement of historians as expert judicial witnesses in tobacco litigation. There is still so much to discover.

Ghent, Belgium
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