



American Legal Realism and Empirical Social Science (Studies in Legal History)

John Henry Schlegel

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John Henry Schlegel recovers a largely ignored aspect of American Legal Realism, a movement in legal thought in the 1920s and 1930s that sought to bring the modern notion of empirical science into the study and teaching of law. In this book, he explores individual Realist scholars' efforts to challenge the received notion that the study of law was primarily a matter of learning rules and how to manipulate them. He argues that empirical research was integral to Legal Realism, and he explores why this kind of research did not, finally, become a part of American law school curricula. Schlegel reviews the work of several prominent Realists but concentrates on the writings of Walter Wheeler Cook, Underhill Moore, and Charles E. Clark. He reveals how their interest in empirical research was a product of their personal and professional circumstances and demonstrates the influence of John Dewey's ideas on the expression of that interest. According to Schlegel, competing understandings of the role of empirical inquiry contributed to the slow decline of this kind of research by professors of law.

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