



Legitimating the Law: The Struggle for Judicial Competency in Early National New Hampshire

John Phillip Reid



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John Phillip Reid is one of the most highly regarded historians of law as it was practiced on the state level in the nascent United States. He is not just the recipient of numerous honors for his scholarship but the type of historian after whom such accolades are named: the John Phillip Reid Award is given annually by the American Society for Legal History to the author of the best book by a mid-career or senior scholar. *Legitimating the Law* is the third installment in a trilogy of books by Reid that seek to extend our knowledge about the judicial history of the early republic by recounting the development of courts, laws, and legal theory in New Hampshire.

Here Reid turns his eye toward the professionalization of law and the legitimization of legal practices in the Granite State—customs and codes of professional conduct that would form the basis of judiciaries in other states and that remain the cornerstone of our legal system to this day throughout the U.S. *Legitimating the Law* chronicles the struggle by which lawyers and torchbearers of strong, centralized government sought to bring standards of competence to New Hampshire through the professionalization of the bench and the bar—ambitions that were fought vigorously by both Jeffersonian legislators and anti-Federalists in the private sector alike, but ultimately to no avail.



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