



The Starting Place

*Washington State Law Library's
quarterly e-newsletter*

Serving the legal information needs of the citizens of Washington State

Winter 2015

Magna Carta Turns 800

Rule of law, due process, executive power, trial by jury—each of these legal principles occupies a place of importance in the American legal tradition. In 2015 we celebrate the document that gave birth to them.

Magna Carta was granted by King John of England at Runnymede on June 15, 1215 to regain the allegiance of rebel barons who, displeased with his arbitrary rule, had captured London. The charter's primary purpose was to restore feudal rights that had been exploited by the king. King John had no intentions, however, of abiding by the charter. In fact, the charter was annulled in August of that year by Pope Innocent III, and unrest continued until the deaths of the Pope and King John. Magna Carta survived, however, to be revised and reissued by Kings Henry III and Edward I.

Though it had been confirmed many times over the centuries by kings and entered English statute law in 1297, Magna Carta's prominence faded. It was to be rediscovered by seventeenth century jurists such as English lawyer Sir Edward Coke. Coke interpreted the document to have enshrined, in written form, the English liberties that had existed as custom since earliest times.

Coke's interpretations, recorded in his *The Institutes of the Lawes of England*, had broad influence not only in England, but in the American colonies as well. In 1606, Coke drafted The First Charter of Virginia which guaranteed the rights of Englishmen to the Virginia colonists. Subsequently, Magna Carta influences could be seen in colonial documents setting out individual rights, such as the Massachusetts Body of Liberties. Most importantly, Coke's works were studied by the likes of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and John Adams, which would seal Magna Carta's fate as the document central to the development of the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Eight hundred years have passed since the granting of Magna Carta at Runnymede. Despite its original intent as a feudal document, protecting the rights of a powerful few, Magna Carta today symbolizes justice and the individual liberties guaranteed to all American citizens.

Please visit our 800 Years of Magna Carta display in the library's Main Reading Room, highlighting Coke's *Second Institute*, a 1587 printing of Magna Carta and other collection materials.

Learn More

[The Magna Carta Trust's Magna Carta 800th](#)

[Library of Congress's Magna Carta: Muse and Mentor](#)

[American Bar Association's Magna Carta: Enduring Legacy, 1215-2015](#)

[The British Library's Magna Carta: Law, Liberty, Legacy](#)

[Online Library of Liberty's collection of scholarly works on Magna Carta](#)

[English translation of Magna Carta, 1215](#)

Legislature Website Changes

The [Washington State Legislature](#) has begun the 2015-16 biennium with a new website design. The new design allows for better compatibility with mobile devices. New to the homepage are easy to locate buttons for finding legislative district and legislator information, tracking and commenting on bills, and more. We are also excited about the recent expansion of the [RCW Archive](#) to include RCW volumes back to 1973. The volumes are available as PDF images.

New Database

LoislawConnect's [Family Law Library](#) is now available on all public computers in the library, with access to titles on prenuptial agreements, asset valuation in divorce, child support and custody, and divorce settlements. This database also pulls together forms and checklists from various titles for easy searching.

Human Trafficking Guide

Recently added to our print collection, [A Guide to Human Trafficking for State Courts](#) is a resource for court practitioners that assists in navigating this complex area of the law. Published by the Human Trafficking and the State Courts Collaborative, in partnership with the National Association for Court Management, the guide supports court personnel by demystifying



A Guide to Human Trafficking for State Courts

types of human trafficking and providing approaches to addressing the issue. The guide also includes links to additional outside resources. The guide's subject matter is highly relevant to those in law enforcement and victim advocacy, as well. It is also available [online](#) at the Collaborative's website.

Law on the Internet

While [Google Scholar](#) has been supplying case law and law review articles online for years, there are other free or low-cost law websites worth checking out. Whether it's Casetext's cases with crowdsourced annotations or apps for codes and court rules, these tools can help in a pinch.

Cases and Oral Arguments

[FDSys United States Courts Opinions](#)

[CourtListener](#)

[Casetext](#)

[Justia](#)

Law Reviews

[Law Review Commons](#)

[ABA's Free Full-Text Online Law Review/Journal Search](#)

E-books

[The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction \(CALI\)](#)

[Introduction to Basic Legal Citation](#)

Apps

[Lawyer-Apps.com](#)

[PocketJustice](#)

[Sunlight Foundation's Congress and Open States](#)

[UCLA's Mobile Applications for Law Students and Lawyers](#)

Washington State Law Library

Temple of Justice
415 12th Ave. SW
Olympia, WA 98501

Visit us at: <http://www.courts.wa.gov/library>

Email us at: library.requests@courts.wa.gov

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Chat hours: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday - Friday

Hours: 8 am-5 pm, M-F

Phone: (360) 357-2136

Fax: (360) 357-2153

Editor: Shani Cate, (360) 357-2136

Comments Welcome!