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Title Examination In Virginia. Sidney F. Parham, Jr.

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BOOK REVIEWS

TITLE EXAMINATION IN VIRGINIA. Sidney F. Parham, Jr. Charlottesville: The Michie Company, 1965. 179 pp., \$4.00.

A revered law professor at Washington and Lee used to say that in teaching the law to his students, he believed in "putting the fodder down where the calves can get it." Certainly this is a desirable method of explaining complicated legal propositions, whether it be to the law student or to the practicing attorney who is inexperienced in the particular field of law. It is not, however, always easy for the experienced attorney, who is more interested in the subtle ramifications of the subject on which he is expert, to couch his teaching in basic, comprehensive terms.

Sidney F. Parham, Jr. of the Buena Vista Bar has reached this desirable result in his book, *Title Examination in Virginia*. Mr. Parham is a veteran title examiner and recognized expert in the field of real estate law, but in accomplishing his stated purpose of publishing a brief work on the fundamental principles of title examination, he has imparted his knowledge in simple concise terms, which will be most helpful to the neophyte in this rather complicated field.

Never before has the quality of title examination by Virginia lawyers been as important as it is today. As our state continues to become more urbanized, as mortgage money continues to be plentiful, we will find the frequency of real estate transactions continuing to increase. Also, there is no reason to believe that the spiraling appreciation in the value of land improvements will diminish in the foreseeable future. To meet the demand of investors in real estate for secure titles, our Bar must continue to contain a considerable number of attorneys who are well versed in both the mechanics of title examination and in the law of real property.

The increased use of title insurance in Virginia has in no way diminished this need for competent title examination, since in every instance in which a title policy insuring Virginia land is issued, the insurer is relying upon a certificate furnished by an independent, practicing attorney. For these reasons, any treatise which will serve as an aid in educating the recent law graduate or the older attorney who is not experienced in title examination is most welcome. Mr. Parham's book will be a very useful tool in accomplishing this result. Except for chapters on title examination in the handbooks *Purchase*

and *Sale of Real Estate in Virginia* and *Virginia Lawyer's Basic Practice Handbook*, distributed by the Joint Committee on Continuing Legal Education of the Virginia State Bar and the Virginia State Bar Association and in *Virginia Practice Methods* (West Publishing Co. 1965) this book is the first aid afforded title lawyers in Virginia since Mr. Lucian B. Cox published the second edition of *A Manual for Title Examiners in Virginia* (The Michie Co. 1947).

While not professing to be a profound treatise on real estate law, *Title Examination in Virginia* does more than merely outline the mechanics of a title search. In fact, only one chapter is devoted to the procedure of "running the records." Rather, the author has included basic precepts which he feels the examiner must know in order to furnish his client an opinion on title. These deal with, among others, such matters as examination of instruments, descriptions, restrictive covenants, easements, chancery suits, title through decedents, liens, tax titles, and adverse possession. Throughout the book are found suggested forms for abstracting these matters.

Very useful appendices are included which make the book worthwhile to the title examiner whether he is a novice or a veteran. These include charts of land measurement, a table of curative statutes, acknowledgment requirements, commutation tables, tables of recordation fees and taxes, and samples of title examination notes, certificates, and abstract of title. Because of the size of the book, this information may easily be carried in the attorney's briefcase.

I strongly recommend that the young lawyer study this book and use it as a guide in examining his first titles. It will also serve as a review for the veteran examiner in addition to placing needed charts and tables at his fingertips.

MARVIN C. BOWLING, JR.*

VIGNETTES OF LEGAL HISTORY. Julius J. Marke. New Jersey: Fred B. Rothman & Co. 1965. pp., xv, 337. \$6.50.

This volume by Professor Marke will both instruct and delight those who are fortunate enough to read it, especially members and aspiring members of the legal profession. For the student who is considering law study it will provide an unusual opportunity to get the "feel" of the law and thus will assist him in making his decision.

For his vignettes the author has selected from English and Amer-

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