

**A Guide to New Jersey Legal Bibliography and Legal History**, CAMERON ALLEN, Fred B. Rothman & Co., Littleton, Colorado, 1984, pp. 636.

**New Jersey Legal Research Handbook**, PAUL AXEL-LUTE, New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education, Newark, New Jersey, 1984, pp. 378.

Acquiring legal research skills is a difficult and laborious task. Most attorneys are not particularly skilled in the art. Many are untrained, while only a few are proficient.

Legal research skills are in large part neglected by law schools. Typically, law schools offer a one or two credit course in legal research supplemented by the requirement of a research paper to be written before graduation. In addition, students may learn research skills by preparing for a moot court competition, writing for a law review, or researching a clinical problem. Unfortunately, these law school experiences often fall short of providing the student with the advanced research abilities required of most sophisticated practitioners. As a result, many attorneys soon realize that their research ability is limited. Some resent the fact that they were not "made" to develop their talents more fully while in law school. Young lawyers should realize, however, that because of the inherent nature of the task, law schools cannot be expected to do more. The task of developing efficient legal research skills is largely a do-it-yourself project. Nevertheless, development of these skills need not be a sink-or-swim proposition. Legal research guides and manuals are available to assist all lawyers in developing their research techniques.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately for New Jersey attorneys, two excellent research manuals dealing specifically with New Jersey law have been published recently.<sup>2</sup>

Paul Axel-Lute's<sup>3</sup> *New Jersey Legal Research Handbook* is a basic research manual often used as a text in classes on legal bibliography. It was published by the New Jersey Institute for Continuing

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., M. COHEN, *LEGAL RESEARCH IN A NUTSHELL* (4th ed. 1985); M. COHEN & R. BERRING, *HOW TO FIND THE LAW* (8th ed. 1983); J. JACOBSTEIN & R. MERSKY, *FUNDAMENTALS OF LEGAL RESEARCH* (2d ed. 1981); M. PRICE, H. BITNER & S. BYSIEWICZ, *EFFECTIVE LEGAL RESEARCH* (4th ed. 1979) (all examples of the fine legal research guides available today).

<sup>2</sup> See C. ALLEN, *A GUIDE TO NEW JERSEY LEGAL BIBLIOGRAPHY AND LEGAL HISTORY* (1984); P. AXEL-LUTE, *NEW JERSEY LEGAL RESEARCH HANDBOOK* (1984).

<sup>3</sup> Paul Axel-Lute is currently the Collection Development Librarian at Rutgers University School of Law, Newark. He has served at the same institution as Federal Documents Librarian (1973-1979) and User Services Librarian (1979-1983), and he has taught legal bibliography at both Rutgers law and library schools.

Legal Education for the benefit of the practicing bar. The text is a simple, straightforward presentation, identifying and examining the various types of law books available to researchers. Primary sources, statutes, and reports are covered first, followed by an explanation of digests, citators, and administrative law materials. Other chapters discuss attorney general opinions, constitutional source materials, legislative history, municipal ordinances, court rules and records, and briefs. Secondary sources, such as legal periodicals and treatises, are reviewed in a somewhat more limited fashion.

A special chapter on computer-assisted legal research is also included in the *Handbook*. The growth of computerized searching has progressed so rapidly, however, that the chapter is already dated and must be supplemented with later information from the vendors to bring it up to date. Chapter 21, a "Summary of Research Procedures," serves as a checklist of legal research steps to be followed in a systematic way in order to ensure a complete and thorough investigation of available sources. This chapter is well worth perusal by a researcher about to embark on a major project.

The *Handbook* is an elementary, but excellent, manual on legal research in New Jersey. It is aimed at the beginner and is especially appropriate for, and helpful to, students. The text is liberally supplemented with illustrations and examples from the publications discussed. Experienced researchers will already be familiar with most of the materials discussed and will already know how to use them. Nonetheless, the *Handbook* serves well as a refresher course for those needing a quick review. Especially helpful to attorneys are samples of citations of New Jersey legal materials conforming to the *Manual on Style* approved by the New Jersey Supreme Court.<sup>4</sup>

Professor Cameron Allen's<sup>5</sup> text, *A Guide to New Jersey Legal Bibliography and Legal History*, is an exhaustive guide to New Jersey law books—both current and retrospective. While Axel-Lute's work serves as a basic handbook, Allen's serves as an upper level or graduate course in legal bibliography. Allen takes the reader further and deeper into the subject.

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<sup>4</sup> N.J. ADMIN. OFFICE OF THE COURTS, *MANUAL ON STYLE (REVISED)*, approved by the New Jersey Supreme Court, Dec. 1979, reprinted in 105 N.J.L.J. 57 (1980).

<sup>5</sup> Cameron Allen, now Professor Emeritus, served as Professor of Law and Law Librarian at Rutgers University, Newark from 1965 until 1981. The *Guide* is a fitting monument to a long and distinguished career as a New Jersey law librarian and legal bibliographer of the first rank.

Professor Allen begins his work with a thorough examination of New Jersey organic laws. Colonial documents and source materials concerning the constitutions of 1776, 1844, and 1947, as well as the constitutional convention of 1966, are listed and discussed. The "convenient" and the "best evidence" texts are also identified and explained.

The distinguished professor gives the same exhaustive and authoritative treatment to statutory sources. Every known source of the session laws is listed and explained. Sources of public laws *not* published in the session laws are similarly provided. In addition, the differences between codes, compilations, consolidations, and revisions are explained, and all known publications of these sources are reported. Finally, current statutory sources are discussed, and a clear explanation of how to keep abreast of current legislative activity is presented.<sup>6</sup>

Equally exhaustive and authoritative treatment is given to legislative history, executive legislation, administrative rules and regulations, municipal ordinances, New Jersey courts and court reports, digests, indexes, citators, court rules, and administrative decisions. The chapters devoted to judicial sources discuss the legislative basis for the New Jersey courts and for the publication of New Jersey court reports from the earliest times to the present. The chapter on legislative history indicates which sources are *not* available as well as those that are. Knowing the availability or nonavailability of these materials can save a researcher countless hours of effort and frustration.

The *Guide* is not a "quick read" resource on how to do legal research effortlessly. Those looking for an easy start will do better with Axel-Lute's *Handbook*. On the other hand, those seeking an authoritative and exhaustive manual will find it in Allen's *Guide*.

Researchers may use the *Guide* as a reference tool, consulting only the parts relevant to a given problem and ignoring the rest. For this purpose, the detailed table of contents and excellent index are highly useful. In contrast, the scholar or librarian may consult the volume for the most minute details concerning New Jersey legal publications—information that is nowhere else avail-

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<sup>6</sup> See C. ALLEN, *supra* note 2, at 192. Professor Allen provides several telephone numbers that an attorney may use to determine the status of current legislation:

Toll Free (800) 792-8630  
(800) 257-5395  
Other (609) 292-6395

able and which would take excessive time and effort to ferret out from original sources. The *Guide* conveniently brings this information to the finger tips of all persons doing detailed research on New Jersey law.

The *Guide* may also be used to build a research collection of New Jersey legal materials. Every research law library in New Jersey should have a copy for reference and should use it to check the library's collections for completeness. In addition, every law librarian working with New Jersey materials should read—and virtually memorize—the *Guide*'s detailed topic coverage. This will ensure that the librarian will recall relevant materials, although perhaps scarce or obscure, when the materials might be helpful in an involved legal research problem.

The value of Professor Allen's work will doubtlessly accrue with time. One hundred years from now the information in the *Guide* will still be useful in identifying and dealing with early New Jersey legal materials. In fact, the value of the information will increase as the number of surviving copies of early materials decreases.

Among the twenty most populous states, New Jersey was one of only three lacking a current guide for research in the state's law.<sup>7</sup> This void is now more than adequately filled. The New Jersey legal community is fortunate to have two newly published manuals on legal bibliography and research. The acquisition of both the *Handbook* and the *Guide* is strongly recommended for legal scholars, researchers, attorneys, law librarians, and libraries with significant collections on New Jersey law.

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<sup>7</sup> See M. COHEN & R. BERRING, *supra* note 1, at 713-14; J. JACOBSTEIN & R. MER-SKY, *supra* note 1, at 594-95 (both listing the various state legal research guides currently available).

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