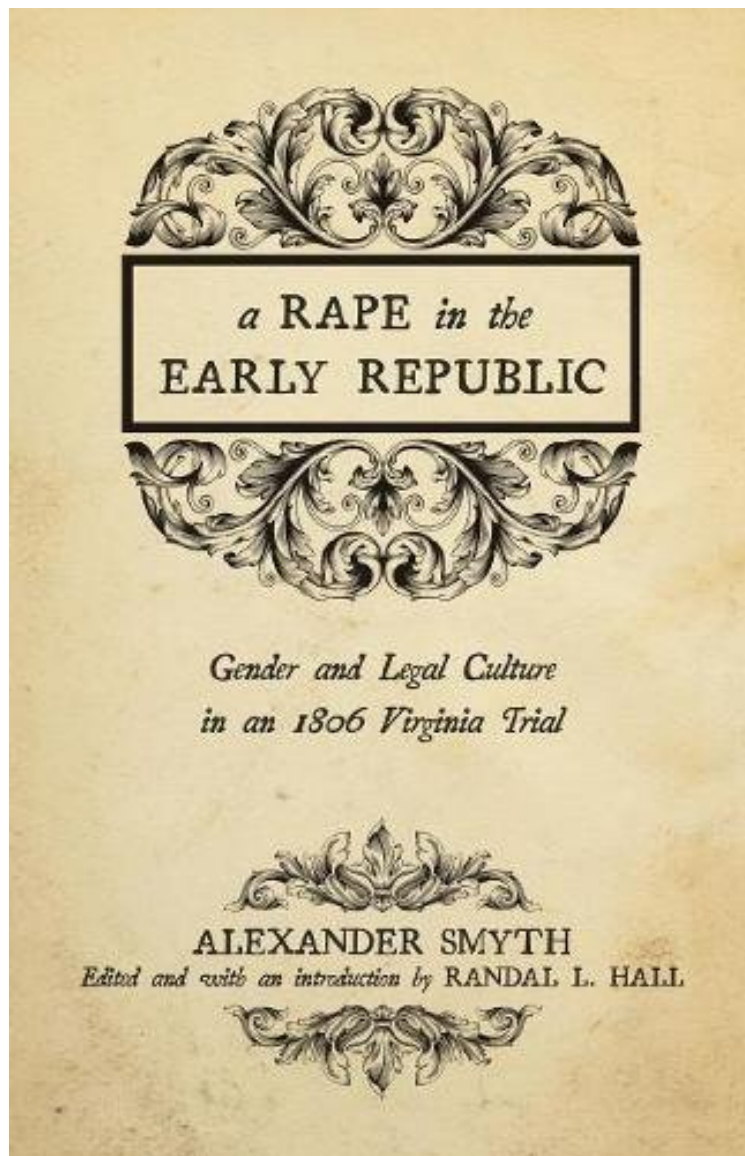


[E-BOOK] A Rape in the Early Republic: Gender and Legal Culture in an 1806 Virginia Trial (New Directions In Southern History)

## **A Rape in the Early Republic: Gender and Legal Culture in an 1806 Virginia Trial (New Directions In Southern History)**

*Alexander Smyth*

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**Alexander Smyth : A Rape in the Early Republic: Gender and Legal Culture in an 1806 Virginia Trial (New Directions In Southern History)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Rape in the Early Republic: Gender and Legal Culture in an 1806 Virginia Trial (New Directions In

Southern History):

On January 14, 1806, Sidney Hanson was raped by John Deskins on a rough gravel path in the woods in Tazewell County, Virginia. In the early nineteenth century, trials for rape were rare. Scanty court records typically lacked the detail needed to reconstruct the lives of those involved and evaluate the social and physical setting of the crime. Yet the events on that fateful day in 1806 would be the exception. In *A Rape in the Early Republic*, Randal L. Hall reproduces the complete trial testimony of Alexander Smyth, the prosecutor for Hanson's trial. Smyth's detailed record offers a revealing glimpse into how early rape cases moved through the legal system, first at the local level and then in the state's recently created district court system. It also shows that Deskins was not the only one on trial; Hanson's character was being scrutinized as well. Hall's introduction, rather than offering an analysis of Smyth's documents, provides important context and highlights historical themes that Hanson's situation illustrates. Featuring classroom discussion ideas and a list of suggested reading, *A Rape in the Early Republic* will be a valuable resource for students and scholars as well as anyone interested in gender, law, and society in the early republic.

"Hall's narrative raises a number of worthwhile questions perfect for classroom discussion and supplies useful prompts to start those conversations. Any class examining the early republic, sexuality, and legal history will find *A Rape in the Early Republic* a valuable work." Jeff Forret, author of *Slave Against Slave: Plantation Violence in the Old South* "There's a lot to like about *A Rape in the Early Republic*. Hall writes well and his effective presentation of the characters and their story in the introduction will surely help to prepare readers for the documentation that follows. The questions for classroom discussion, which appear at the end of the text, are smart, broad, and open-ended." Cynthia A. Kierner, author of *Scandal at Bizarre: Rumor and Reputation in Jefferson's America* About the Author Randal L. Hall is associate professor of history at Rice University and editor of the *Journal of Southern History*. He is the author of several books, including *Mountains on the Market: Industry, the Environment, and the South*, and *Lum and Abner: Rural America and the Golden Age of Radio*.