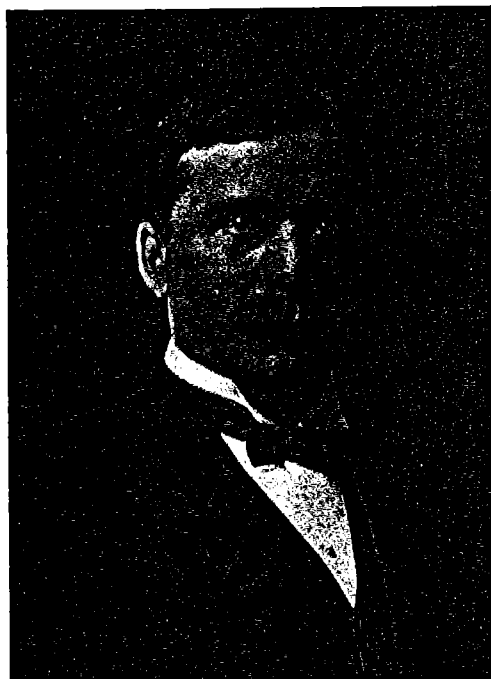


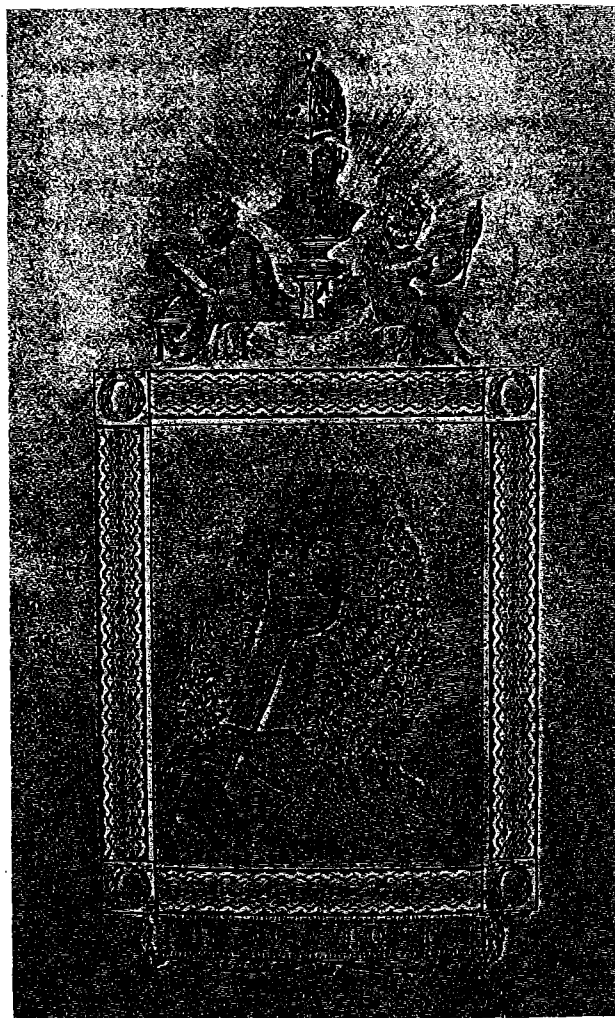
Blackstone at Yale

Morris Cohen has been law librarian and professor of law at Yale since 1981.

Morris L. Cohen



Macgrane Coxe



Blessed are the book collectors for they preserve the printed word.

Blessed are the library donors for they support the pursuit of knowledge.

With those benedictions, the Yale Law School can well honor the memory of Macgrane Coxe, B.A., Yale College 1879, and M.A. (honorary) 1908, who gave his unsurpassed collection on the works of Sir William Blackstone to the Law School Library in 1907, and added to it significantly in 1913. Since 1913, gifts by other donors and many purchases have increased the Yale Blackstone collection to approximately six hundred volumes.

The original gift was described by the then librarian, Charles P. Sherman, in his annual report for 1907-1908, as "the most complete collection of Blackstone's *Commentaries* and works based thereon in America and perhaps in the world, embracing original editions from the

first English to the latest American, together with French and German translations of Blackstone's work—in all 293 volumes and two pamphlets." With later additions, the collection today is undoubtedly the most complete holding of Blackstone's printed works in any library in the world. Mr. Coxe's collection of Blackstone was built with the assistance of Charles C. Soule, Boston bookseller and bibliographer. In addition to the collection, Mr. Coxe also provided funds for those volumes in need of repair and binding.

Macgrane Coxe had practiced law in New York City, specializing in railroad law. For four years, he was assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, and for seven years served as United States commissioner for the U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit. In 1897 he represented the United States as minister to Guatemala and Honduras, and then continued to practice law and served as referee in bankruptcy, until his death in 1923.

COMMENTARIES
ON THE
L A W S
OF
E N G L A N D.
BOOK THE FIRST.

BY
WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, ESQ.
VENERIAN PROFESSOR OF LAW,
AND
SOLICITOR GENERAL TO HER MAJESTY.

O X F O R D,
PRINTED AT THE CLarendON PRESS,
MDCCLXXV.

AN ABRIDGMENT
OF
Blackstone's Commentaries
ON THE
LAWS OF ENGLAND,
IN
A Series of Letters
FROM
A FATHER TO HIS DAUGHTER,
CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR
THE USE AND ADVANCEMENT
OF
FEMALE EDUCATION.

"... Of Law, no less can be acknowledged, than that her seat is
the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in
Heaven and Earth, do her reverence; the very least, as feeling her care,
and the greatest as all except from her power; both Angels and Men,
and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and
manner, yet all with uniform consent, admitting her as the mother of their
Peace and Joy." *Blackstone's Eccl. Polity, Book 1.*

BY A BARRISTER AT LAW,
SERJEANT AT LAW,
AND COUNSELLOR AT LAW.

London:
PRINTED FOR JOHN BATHARD AND SON,
NO. 187, NICHOLLS.

1832

YALE LAW LIBRARY

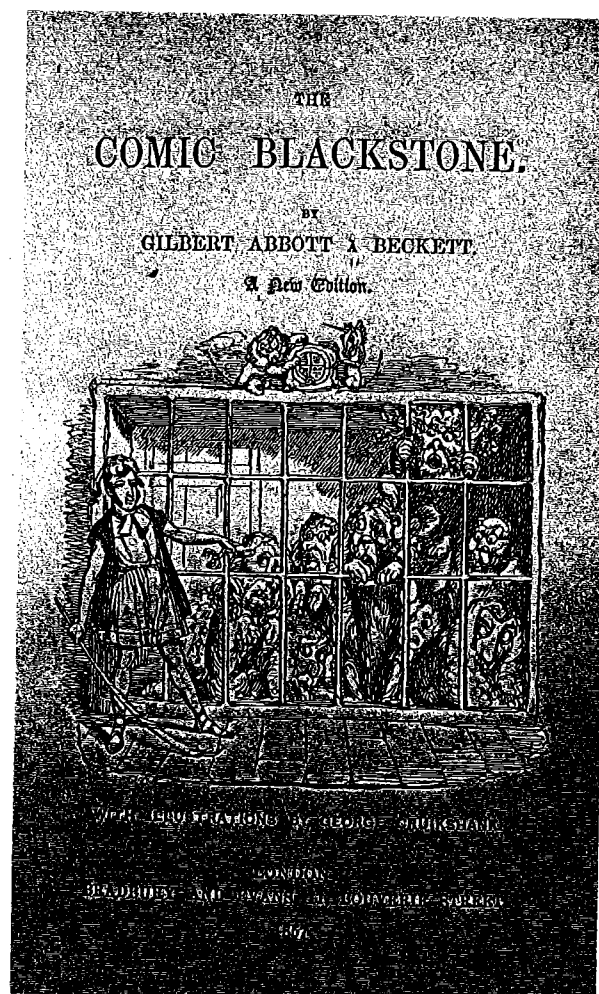
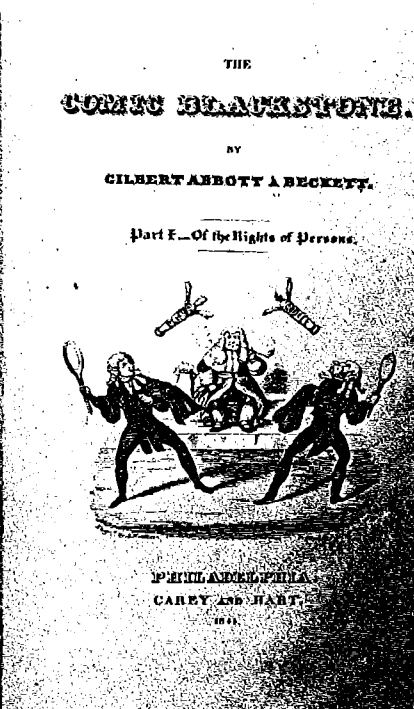
William Blackstone was called to the bar in 1746 and, after lecturing privately at Oxford on English law from 1753-58, he was appointed Vinerian Professor in 1758. He wrote several law books before publishing his major work, *Commentaries on the Law of England* (1765-70). The *Commentaries* were based on his Oxford lectures, and the four books, each comprising a separate volume, covered respectively Rights of Persons, Rights of Things, Private Wrongs, and Public Wrongs. Although not without its critics (Bentham commented on Blackstone's too easy acceptance of existing law, and Joseph Story noted his neglect of equity), the work was widely admired, often quoted and frequently reprinted. It went through forty-four English and Irish editions (many of which were pirated), and over fifty American editions. Virtually all of these are in the Yale collection.

The *Commentaries* were revised, annotated, abridged, enlarged, rendered into questions

and answers, reduced to catechism, treated in comic fashion, illustrated, translated, made poetic, printed as a series of letters from a father to his daughter, and simplified for children. All are at Yale. Probably only the Bible and Shakespeare have appeared in so many forms and variations. In addition to the printed annotations which appear in most of the later editions, many of the copies in the Yale collection include manuscript notes by earlier owners. Perhaps the cruelest indignity is the following marginal comment by an owner of one of the pirated Dublin editions: "The author is a sensible kind of man but, for a university man, a poor grammarian."

Blessed also are the bibliographers for they bring order to the works of scholarship and make them accessible.

With so many editions and variants, correct bibliographic description and identification has



become a matter of importance, not only to librarians, but to legal scholars, historians, biographers, and students. The Yale Law Library made its own contribution to Blackstone scholarship some years ago when one of its staff, Catherine Spicer Eller, compiled a superb analytical bibliography, *The William Blackstone Collection in the Yale Law Library, a Bibliographical Catalogue* (Yale Law Library Publications No. 6). Published by the Yale University Press in 1938, that work has become the standard bibliographic guide to works by, and based upon, Blackstone.

The Eller bibliography will be the basis of the latest variant form of Blackstone's work. Filming of the Yale Collection will begin shortly at the Sterling Memorial Library for a micro-

fiche edition of the complete collection to be distributed by the Microform Consortium to libraries throughout the world. The microfiche will reduce the holdings of approximately one hundred linear feet of shelving to a few inches of drawer space. The original volumes will of course remain intact at the Yale Law School, along with an archival microfiche as a back-up duplicate. Proceeds from the filming arrangement will also enable the Law Library to develop its growing collection of legal microfiche in other areas.

While the Law School Library performs the routine operations involved in administering its varied collections and services, it offers valuable resources made possible by the interests and generosity of past collectors and donors.