

## *Finding Federal Court Cases at Flint Public Library*

### *Print and Online Sources*

#### **ABOUT THE U.S. COURT SYSTEM**

The United States federal court system is comprised of the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Courts of Appeals, often referred to as U.S. circuit courts, and district or trial courts. The U.S. Courts of Appeals hears appeals from the district courts. The United States Supreme Court, our nation's highest court, is the court of final appeal for all legal controversies in the federal courts and all federal issues arising in state courts. The Supreme Court hears approximately 150 cases per year, a small percentage of all cases brought before it. The following is a list of resources to aid users in locating federal court cases and information about federal court cases.

#### **SOURCES OF FEDERAL COURT CASES:**

##### **PRINT SOURCES**

- **The United States Reports (US or U.S.)**  
Reference 347.99 US - Law Aisle  
Official reporter for the U.S. Supreme Court. Flint Public Library has volumes 344 (1952) to current edition. Bound volumes are two years behind; preliminary prints are available (subject to formal revision before the bound volumes are available). Each volume contains a "Table of Cases" (a list of cases reported) and a subject index to the cases. The "Table of Cases" and subject index are not cumulative.
- **Shepard's Acts and Cases by Popular Names: Federal and State (Shepard's)**  
Reference 345 Sh (Law Aisle)  
Part 3 lists citation information for cases that are commonly referred to by popular names. *Some* of the popular names for cases include the parties' names. For use in finding cases decided before August of 2004.
- **Great American Court Cases**  
Edited by Mark Mikula and L. Mpho Mabunda (Reference 345.3 Gr)  
While this source covers mostly U.S. Supreme Court cases, it discusses approximately 60 cases from lower federal and state courts that have had a significant impact on the law or played a pivotal part in an emerging point of law.
- **Guide to the U.S. Supreme Court**  
By David G. Savage (Reference 347.99 Sa)  
Excellent source for locating comprehensive information about the Supreme Court. Includes a case index, useful for finding case citations, and a chronology of the Court's major decisions.
- **Historic U.S. Court Cases**  
By John W. Johnson (Reference 345.3 Jo)  
Contains essays that discuss important U.S. Supreme Court cases as well as interesting and important lower federal and state court cases.
- **Landmark Decisions of the United States Supreme Court**  
By Paul Finkleman (Reference 347.99 La)  
Contains concise overviews of more than 1,000 significant U.S. Supreme Court cases.
- **West's Encyclopedia of American Law**  
Edited by Jeffrey Lehman and Shirelle Phelps (Reference 340.03 We)  
Excellent source for locating background information regarding laws and cases as well as information on legal terms, concepts, events, and persons significant to U.S. law.

## ONLINE SOURCES

- **United States Supreme Court**

<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/opinions.html>

Contains Supreme Court opinions from 1991 (vol. 502) to 2004 (vol. 544), arranged by volume, recent Court opinions (slip opinions), and a case citation finder (1790 – current) which allows users to search for cases by a name or partial name.

- **Flite: Federal Legal Information through Electronics**

<http://supcourt.ntis.gov/>

Contains Supreme Court opinions from 1937 (vol. 300) to 1975 (vol. 422) which are searchable by keywords or plaintiff and defendant.

- **Supreme Court Collection**

<http://straylight.law.cornell.edu/supct/index.html>

Contains Supreme Court opinions from 1990 to present. Also contains approximately 300+ of the Courts' most important historic decisions. Both collections are searchable by topic, author, and party.

- **FindLaw: Cases and Codes**

<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html> (*U.S. Supreme Court opinions*)

<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/> (*U.S. Court of Appeals opinions*)

Contains Supreme Court Opinions from 1893 (vol. 150) to the present, which are searchable by citation, case title, and full text; can also be browsed by year and *U.S Reports* volume number. Contains United States Court of Appeals, 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court opinions since 1995, searchable by party name, case number, and full text; can also be browsed by year. Also contains opinion summaries for both the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit since September 2000 which are searchable by legal topic, docket number, and party name; opinions can also be browsed by year.

- **Justia**

<http://www.justia.com/courts/>

Contains all the Supreme Court opinions since the 1700's (1 U.S. 1), which are searchable by citation, party names, or words and phrases that may be in the Court's opinions; also browseable by volume, year, or recent opinions. Contains all the U.S. Federal Appellate cases, including the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit, since 1950 which are searchable by keyword and browseable by series, circuit court, or year. Contains U.S. District Court opinions and orders from 2004 to the present which are searchable by party names, district court, lawsuit type, and keyword.

- **United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit**

<http://www.ca6.uscourts.gov/>

Contains published court opinions issued since July 1st, 1999 and unpublished court opinions issued since October 1, 2004. Users can search by case number, short title, date issued, and opinion number.

- **United States Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit: School of Law, Emory**

<http://www.law.emory.edu/6circuit/>

Contains opinions of the Sixth Circuit from January 1995 to June 1999. Users can search by year and month, plaintiff or defendant, or keyword.

- **U.S. Courts: The Federal Judiciary Center**

<http://www.uscourts.gov/allinks.html>

Provides links to the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. appellate courts, and U.S. district courts, including bankruptcy courts.

- **Eastern District Court of Michigan** (Flint is located in the Eastern District Court of Michigan)  
<http://www.mied.uscourts.gov/index.html>  
 Opinions posted are selected by the individual Judges of this court, and are not a complete inventory of all the Judges' decisions. Dates of coverage vary with each Judge.
- **United States Bankruptcy Court: Eastern District of Michigan**  
<http://www.mieb.uscourts.gov/>  
 Contains published opinions judged to be of potential interest to the general public and the legal community by this court's Judges. Dates of coverage vary with each judge. Also tells users how to access individual bankruptcy records.



### HOW TO FIND UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT CASES BY CITATION

347	U.S.	483
		
<b>Volume</b>	<b>Reporter</b>	<b>Starting Page #</b>

- The citation listed above can be found in volume 347 of the **United States Reports (U.S.)**, starting on page. 483.
- See either **The United States Reports**, or **United States Supreme Court, Findlaw: Cases and Codes**, or **Justia** (online sources)

**Please Note:** United States Supreme Court cases are also covered by two unofficial reporters, the Supreme Court Reporter (S. Ct.), and the Lawyer's Edition (L. Ed., or L. Ed.2d). The Flint Public Library does not own these two sources nor does it have a source that lists U.S. Supreme Court parallel citations.

### HOW TO FIND U.S. SUPREME COURT CASES BY PLAINTIFF OR DEFENDANT (PARTY)

Brown	v.	Board of Education
		
<b>Plaintiff</b>		<b>Defendant</b>

- See the "Table of Cases" in **The United States Reports** if you also know the year or session the case was decided in or which volume it appears in.
- See the following online sources: "Party Name Search" at **Findlaw: Cases and Codes**, citation finder at **United States Supreme Court**, the "Case Name Search" at **Flite**, or **Justia**. The above listed secondary print sources can also be used.

### HOW TO FIND UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT CASES ON A TOPIC:

- The Library does not have digests (indices) to federal cases. In order to locate Supreme Courts cases on a particular topic, use the above listed secondary print sources, **Supreme Court Collection**, **Findlaw's** Opinion Summaries, or the subject index in each volume of **The United States Reports**.
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### HOW TO FIND RECENT UNITED STATES. SUPREME COURT CASES

- For recent U.S. Supreme Court Cases, see **United States Supreme Court, Justia**, or **Findlaw: Cases and Codes** (online sources).
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### HOW TO FIND FEDERAL COURT of APPEALS AND DISTRICT COURT CASES

- Federal Court of Appeals cases are reported in the *Federal Reporter* (F), *Federal Reporter, 2d series* (F.2d), and *Federal Reporter, 3 series* (F.3d). Federal District Court cases are reported in the *Federal Supplement* (F.Supp), and the *Federal Supplement 2d series* (F.Supp.2d) The Flint Public Library **does not** have any of these reporters, however, *some* federal opinions rendered in these courts are available online.

#### US Courts of Appeals

- The Sixth Circuit Court has jurisdiction over the state Michigan. It is responsible for hearing appeals from the district courts located within its circuit, as well as appeals from decisions of federal administrative agencies. For opinions rendered in this court see **United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, United States Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit: School of Law, Emory, Justia**, or **Findlaw: Cases and Codes** (online sources). See either **FindLaw: Cases and Codes, Justia**, or **U.S. Courts: The Federal Judiciary Center** (online sources) for opinions in other circuit courts. Searching capability and years of coverage vary with each circuit court.
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#### US District Courts (Trial Courts for the Federal court system)

- The Eastern District Court of Michigan has jurisdiction over the City of Flint and Genesee County. It is responsible for hearing nearly all categories of civil and criminal federal cases. For opinions rendered in this court, see **Eastern District Court of Michigan** or **Justia** (online sources). Please note that very few district opinions are published. See **Findlaw: Cases and Codes, Justia**, or **U.S. Courts: The Federal Judiciary Center** (online sources) for court cases tried in other federal districts.

\*\* If the lower federal court case you are looking for is significant, it may be discussed in **Great American Court Cases, Historic U.S. Court Cases**, or **West's Encyclopedia of Law**.

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#### Bankruptcy Cases/Law

- Bankruptcy laws, which are federal, are in Title 11 (The Bankruptcy Code) of the *United States Code*. Federal district courts have exclusive jurisdiction over bankruptcy cases. Each federal district court has at least one bankruptcy court. For bankruptcy cases originating in the City of Flint and Genesee County, see the **United States Bankruptcy Court: Eastern District of Michigan** (online source). See **U.S. Courts: The Federal Judiciary Center** or **FindLaw: Cases and Codes** (online source) for bankruptcy opinions originating in other district courts.