

The Scopes

Monkey Trial

1925



The Scopes Monkey Trial - 1925

 **Mission:** to look at an example of religious intolerance in the 1920s

The Scopes Monkey Trial in 1925, took place in Dayton, Tennessee. It was a highly publicized trial of a school teacher, John Scopes, who was charged with violating state law by teaching Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. The trial helped to bring the scientific evidence for evolution into the public sphere while also stoking a national debate over the veracity of evolution that continues to the present day.

In March 1925 the Tennessee legislature had passed the **Butler Act**, which made it illegal to teach of any content that denied the story of man's creation as written in the Bible. World attention focused on the trial proceedings, which promised and delivered confrontation between **fundamentalist** literal belief and interpretation of the Scriptures. William Jennings Bryan led for the prosecution and Clarence Darrow for the defense.

Opening statements included Darrow's impassioned speech about the constitutionality (illegality) of the Butler law and his claim that the law violated freedom of religion. Judge John Raulston ruled out any test of the law's constitutionality or argument on the validity of evolutionary theory on the basis that Scopes, rather than the Butler law, was on trial. Raulston determined that expert testimony from scientists would be inadmissible.

The trial's climax came on July 20, when Darrow called on Bryan to testify as an expert witness for the prosecution on the Bible. Raulston moved the trial to the courthouse lawn, due to the large number of spectators and heat inside. Darrow challenged Bryan on various biblical stories and the validity of their literal interpretation. Bryan responded by claiming that Darrow's "only aim was to cast slurs on the Bible." With Raulston limiting the trial to the single question of whether Scopes had taught evolution, which he admittedly had, Scopes was convicted and fined \$100. On appeal, the state Supreme Court upheld the legality of the 1925 law but excused Scopes stating that he had been fined excessively.

In the trial's aftermath, Tennessee stopped the teaching of evolution in the classroom until the Butler Act's repeal in 1967. Additionally, the state legislatures of Mississippi and Arkansas passed their own bans on the teaching of evolution in 1926 and 1928.

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The Monkey Trial



Explore: the significance of the MT.

True False

Answer

Message

Define

Choose

Label

Fix Me

Spot Bias

Word

The Monkey Trial was a _____ of the increasing _____ between _____ urban attitudes and conservative _____ beliefs.

Symptom Liberal Sign
Rural Gap Urban

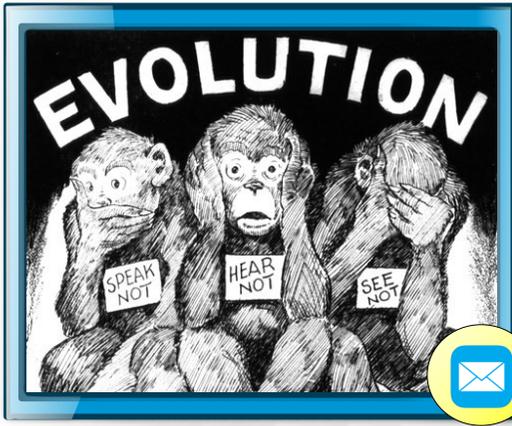


The South and Midwestern states were often called the 'B ____ Belt.' People here were more religious. Christian F _____ were afraid of the changes happening in the cities.



Tennessee was one of 6 states that banned teaching Darwin's theory of evolution in schools.

Why did they do this?



"If anyone wants to teach that hell born, bastard theory of evolution, let him, but do not expect Christian people of this country to pay for the rotten, stinking professor"

Evangelist, Billy Sunday.
1925



A science teacher named **John Scopes** agreed to go to court to challenge the anti-evolution law.

Why would he do this?



The 1925 trial was significant because it was broadcast on national r _____ and over 100 r _____ were in the packed courtroom.



"Both sides went to Dayton (T) hoping to influence popular opinion not the jury. The world listened ... a battle between science and religion."

E. Larson, Trial and Error
1985.

Scopes was found not guilty and fined 100 pounds. But, most felt that Skopes' lawyer, Clarence Darrow won the court debate.

- 1: _____
- 2: _____
- 3: _____



Therefore the Monkey Trial was seen as a victory for the **Modernists** and a defeat for the **Fundamentalists** in their battle to **cancel** this teaching.



The MT was in Dayton = ____
The MT was in Tennessee = ____
John Scopes was guilty = ____
He was fined \$1000 = ____
Modernists won = ____
Verdict was important = ____
The MT was in 1922 = ____



The Monkey Trial Samples

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