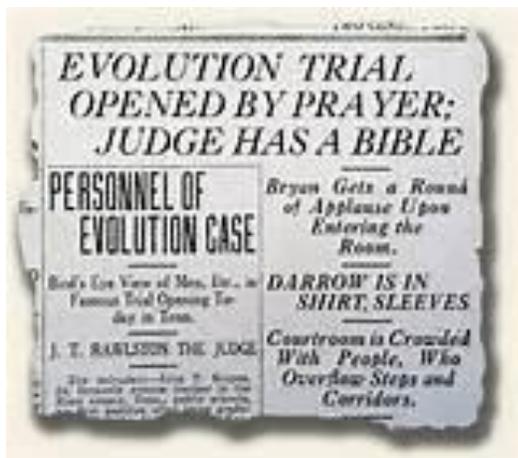




John Scopes



[Clarence Darrow](#) (left) and [William Jennings Bryan](#) chat in court during the Scopes Trial



Scopes Trial

The Scopes Trial, formally known as *The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes* and commonly referred to as the Scopes Monkey Trial, was a famous American legal case in 1925 in which a high school teacher, John Scopes, was accused of violating Tennessee's Butler Act, which made it unlawful to teach evolution in any state-funded school. The trial was deliberately staged in order to attract publicity to the small town of Dayton, Tennessee, where it was held. Scopes was unsure whether he had ever actually taught evolution, but he purposefully incriminated himself so that the case could have a defendant.

Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100, but the verdict was overturned on a technicality. The trial served its purpose of drawing intense national publicity, as national reporters flocked to Dayton to cover the big-name lawyers who had agreed to represent each side. William Jennings Bryan, three-time presidential candidate for the Democrats, argued for the prosecution, while Clarence Darrow, the famed defense attorney, spoke for Scopes. The trial set modernists, who said evolution was consistent with religion, against fundamentalists who said the word of God as revealed in the Bible took priority over all human knowledge. The case was thus seen as both a theological contest and a trial on the veracity of modern science regarding the creation-evolution controversy.

By the later stages of the trial, Clarence Darrow had largely abandoned the ACLU's original strategy and attacked the literal interpretation of the Bible as well as Bryan's limited knowledge of other religions and science.

Bryan chastised evolution for teaching



children that humans were but one of (precisely) 35,000 types of mammals and bemoaned the notion that human beings were descended "Not even from American monkeys, but from old world monkeys"

The trial is perhaps best known today for serving as the inspiration for the play, and later the movie, *Inherit the Wind*, both of which were critical successes.*

Fundamentally, the issues in this trial involve publicly funded education. This involves issues such as the care of children and which rights belong to parents and which rights to government, and to which level of government (federal, state, or local). Usually such education comes down to the most local level, the Board of Education within the county or even city. There are also issues within this case about what topics the general taxpayer should be expected to fund, and what topics are within the personal choice of individual families and should not be imposed on others. Children are more impressionable than adults and are usually regarded as in need of protection from those with agendas other than the good of the child. The issue of which entity is best to decide such things was not solved within this trial.**

*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scopes_Trial

**http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Scopes_Trial