HIS 949

Jessica Feltner

Timeline Elements

9/20/12

*United States v. E. C. Knight,*1895

The government's case against E.C. Knight Company consisted of the argument that in dominating the manufacturing of sugar, the trust also dominated the interstate commerce and therefore was accountable to the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller explained the court’s majority opinion, saying that if there was evidence of a monopoly then the company was illegal under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. However, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act could only apply to interstate commerce, which as Fuller distinguished, manufacturing did not belong to. He said it was important to not include the manufacturing of sugar in interstate commerce because it maintained the line between what the state could police and what Congress could police in business. In the case of E.C. Knight, the conglomerate was located in Pennsylvania only and was therefore, under state control and not affected by the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. The court wanted to keep trusts under control of the state without giving all of the economic power to Congress. Time has shown that this approach, while being favored by the justices over the Congressional empowering alternative, has been largely ineffective in controlling monopolies.1

1. Robert Stanley, *Historic U.S. Court Cases, 1690-1990: An Encyclopedia,* ed. John W. Johnson (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1992)