of the objection. The trial would pause while counsel prepared this, and made it acceptable to the court; and often the court would then write in it a ruling of a few lines, with reasons. A single example, of a ruling in the General Court in 1782, will suffice;[32]

> And the Court (Harrison, Ch. J. and Hanson, J.) accordingly determined that the said deed, on account of the defect in the said acknowledgment, was void; and therefore ruled that the same should not be read in evidence. To which opinion of the court, the plaintiff excepted.

More elaborate rulings will be found in Helms v. Howard,[33] and Harper v. Hampton.[34] In the Court of Chancery longer explanations were usual. When the reasons for the rulings at law were thus stated, the reason for the concurrence or dissent of the Court of Appeals would be sufficiently clear without any additional statement by that court; in many instances the terse comment that the Court of Appeals affirmed or reversed on this or that exception meant clearly enough that it took the view stated or the opposite view. But, as has been said, the Court of Appeals judges did file written opinions in a few cases during the twenty-five years after 1781. The first written in the modern manner appears to have been one filed in 1789 in Ward v. Reeder, 2 Harris & McHenry, 145, 154. Such opinions were exceptional, but there were a few,[35] some of them not reported. Harris and McHenry, like other private reporters, reported only a selection of cases.

32. Flanagan v. Young, 2 Harris & McHenry, 39.
33. 2 Harris & McHenry, 57.
34. 1 Harris & Johnson, 622.
35. 3 Harris & McHenry, 235, 331. 4 Harris & McHenry, 322. 1 Harris & Johnson, 201, 397.