



HD
HISTORICAL
DICTIONARIES ONLINE

HISTORY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS
For a free 30-day trial, visit www.historicaldictionaries.com

ROWMAN &
LITTLEFIELD



BOOKLIST ONLINE'S

**TOP SHELF
REFERENCE**

SPONSORED BY ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD



Three wonderful reference librarians have contributed content to this month's issue, and I couldn't be more pleased to have them on board. Our "Real-Life Reference" contributor, Nicolette Warisse Sosulski, tells the colloquial tale of a woman who "testifies" to the wonder of her library in "Real-Life Reference: Please God, Not My Library!," while regular *Booklist* reference reviewer Muhammed Hassanali ponders the question of what kind of reference works he likes best in "My Favorite Reference." Long-time *Booklist* contributor and former Reference Advisory Board member Donald Altschiller spoke to author Jack Lynch about his book, *You Could Look It Up: The Reference Shelf from Ancient Babylon to Wikipedia*, for the May 15, 2016, print issue of *Booklist*, and we're pleased to offer *Top Shelf Reference* readers the first look at this interview! Be sure to check that issue for an expanded section of Reference Showcase reviews and a bonus "Real-Life Reference," as well!

Our sponsor, Rowman & Littlefield, offers a look at their new online product (and a free trial!), *Historical Dictionaries Online*, which was reviewed in the April 15, 2016, issue of *Booklist*. If you have any suggestions about what you'd like us to cover—or would like to contribute a feature article—feel free to e-mail me at rvnuk@ala.org.

—[Rebecca Vnuk](#), Editor, Collection Management and Library Outreach, *Booklist*

Real-Life Reference: Please God, Not My Library!

by Nicolette Warisse Sosulski



As I began my first semester at the iSchool at University of Washington, my advisor, Joe Janes, told me that my proposed course schedule was all over the place. I was signed up for Legal Reference, Health Reference, and Government Documents. "Are you just taking every course in the 520s that you can, or do you actually have a plan?" he asked. My response was that in case I ended up in public libraries, I was taking the Crisis Reference Triumvirate—the three kinds of information that average patrons don't want to know about, but when they need to know, the situation is high stakes and stressful. When such patrons come to the library, I wanted to be as prepared as possible. Joe acknowledged that "crisis reference" could be a thing.

Health information on the open web is one of my personal dislikes. Not the actual information but the sheer amount of iffy, profit-driven verbiage that masquerades as information. That is why when a patron comes to me with a health question or recent diagnosis, I get somewhat evangelical about databases, encyclopedias, and MedlinePlus. And sometimes I come across people who are just ready to be taken to church and brought into the fold.

[READ MORE](#)

Quick Menu

[Real-Life Reference](#)

[Now Available: *Historical Dictionaries Online*](#)

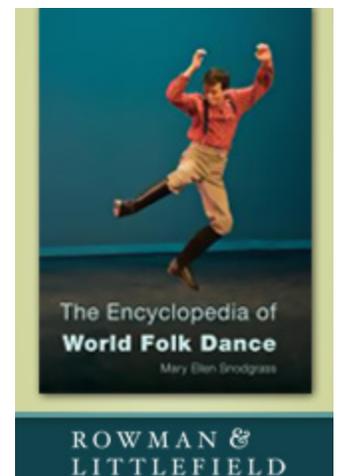
[Looking It Up](#)

[My Favorite Reference](#)

[Featured Reference Review](#)

[#twitterreference](#)

[New Rowman & Littlefield Titles](#)

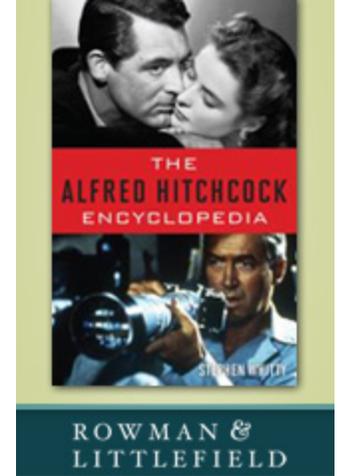


HD HISTORY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS
 HISTORICAL
 DICTIONARIES ONLINE

"There is a vast wealth of
 information available here..."
 — Rebecca Vnuk, *Booklist*

For a free 30-day trial, visit
www.historicaldictionaries.com

ROWMAN &
 LITTLEFIELD



New Rowman & Littlefield Titles

1. [The Ben Jonson Encyclopedia](#)
2. [The Complete Book of 1980s Broadway Musicals](#)
3. [The Dictionary of the Book: A Glossary for Book Collectors, Booksellers, Librarians, and Others](#)
4. [The Encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States, 5 Volumes](#)
5. [The Encyclopedia of Japanese Horror Films](#)

Now Available: Historical Dictionaries Online

SPONSORED CONTENT

For more than 40 years, the Historical Dictionaries titles have presented essential information on a broad range of subjects, including American and world history, art, business, cities, countries, cultures, customs, film, global conflicts, international relations, literature, music, philosophy, religion, sports, and theater. Written by experts, the brief A–Z entries in these volumes describe the main people, events, politics, social issues, institutions, and policies that make the topic unique.



READ MORE

HD HISTORY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS
 HISTORICAL DICTIONARIES ONLINE

For a free 30-day trial,
 visit www.historicaldictionaries.com

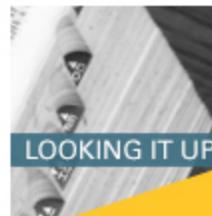
ROWMAN &
 LITTLEFIELD

Looking It Up: Jack Lynch on the Joys of Reference Books

by Donald Altschiller

Lynch tells us his interest in reference stems from early exposure to books, noting that "children's reference books grabbed me when I was very young. And then I got my hands on my father's dictionary and a two-volume desk encyclopedia, and it was love at first sight. I'd spend hours reading entries, flipping the pages at random.

"I didn't get a real sense of the reference world, though, until I was an undergrad working at the University of Pennsylvania's library, and my jaw dropped when I realized that serious reference books filled entire rooms. I loved that there were indexes to folklore motifs, dictionaries of the vocabulary of plant quarantine, and bibliographies of bibliographies. They say a first step to wisdom is realizing how much you don't know. Penn's reference section gave me an inkling of how much there is to know—and just how little I did know. It confirmed my intention to go to graduate school."



READ MORE

My Favorite Reference

by Muhammed Hassanali

I stared at my computer screen incredulously. I drained my glass of water, rubbed my eyes, blinked a few times, and looked at the screen again. "How could someone have thought of something like this, never mind send it to scores of reviewers?" I asked myself in horror. However, there it was on my laptop screen unflinchingly staring back at me. It was a deceptively simple question from my editor at *Booklist*, who was compiling answers for a feature column: "What is your favorite reference work and why?" Deceptive because reference reviewers love all their references the same—just as parents love all their children the same. Parents interact differently with their children, depending on temperament and personality; they spend different amounts of time with each, guide them differently, and even hold them to different standards. Despite these differences, they love their children the same. So it is with reference reviewers—they love all their references the same. I couldn't even begin to fathom how I would narrow them down by title, so I spent time thinking about them as categories.



[READ MORE](#)

Featured Reference Review: *Archaeology of Food: An Encyclopedia*

by Kaela Casey

Food has always been an essential part of human life and culture; food is not just what provides humans sustenance but is used to celebrate, communicate, and innovate. This set delves into these diverse aspects of the archaeological history of food through more than 240 entries covering various time periods, theories, foodstuffs, and locations and cultures worldwide.



[READ MORE](#)

#twitterreference

by Rebecca Vnuk

Librarians rarely just sit there while out at the reference desk. Even when there's not a patron in front of them, they're often furiously typing away at something on their computers. It's likely that they're searching for the answer to a previous question, working on the latest collection report, tweaking a new public desk schedule . . . or perhaps they're tweeting. Let's take a peek.

 **Fake Library Stats**
@FakeLibStats [Follow](#)

92% of librarians will always fight for your right to party, just not in the library

9:54 AM - 11 Apr 2016

  106  115

 **tamarack**
@tamahoc [Follow](#)

must have accidentally put a "pls stand here and swear loudly for help" sign at the printer... [#libraryproblems](#)

1:05 PM - 12 Apr 2016

   6



UVaLibrary
@UVaLibrary

Follow

A patron reported a public stapler was "gooey." Investigation revealed that someone had tried to staple a sun-dried tomato. [#libraryproblems](#)

1:40 PM - 17 Mar 2016

↩️ ↻️ 12 ❤️ 15



Heather Booth
@boothheather

Follow

"Can you recommend a book to help me fall asleep? Like, that I'll actually fall asleep while reading?" [#readadv](#)
[#librarylife](#)

5:41 PM - 5 Apr 2016

↩️ ↻️ 5 ❤️ 17



Lousy Librarian
@LousyLibrarian

Follow

I've developed a new answer for relatives who ask if I enjoy getting to sit around reading books all day. Actually it's more of a gesture.

8:23 AM - 18 Mar 2016

↩️ ↻️ 49 ❤️ 118



goddessofnightcheese
@BrittyKitty326

Follow

I just said "enjoy your book!"to the guy checking out "Nolo's guide to divorce"[#istoolatetosaysorryyyyyy](#)
[#librarylife](#)

5:02 PM - 8 Mar 2016

↩️ ↻️ 5 ❤️ 20



Robin Bradford
@Tuphlos

Follow

Right now, I hear the dulcet tones of a typewriter! I do love that sound. It's been a LONG while since I've heard it.
[#publicservicelibrarian](#)

12:24 PM - 8 Apr 2016

↩️ ↻️ ❤️ 5



Frank Skornia
@FSkornia

Follow

As librarians, we should embrace internet April Fools Day jokes as examples of the awareness we should use every day on the internet

1:12 PM - 2 Apr 2016

2 4

If you haven't already signed up to receive future issues of *Booklist Online's Top Shelf Reference* and would like to do so, [click here](#).

You are receiving this newsletter either because you subscribed to it or because you have expressed interest in *Booklist*, *Booklist Online*, or other publications of the American Library Association. This newsletter is published approximately eight times per year. We will not sell your e-mail to outside parties, although we may share it with other similar publications of the ALA. To unsubscribe from this newsletter, [click here](#). To manage your e-mail subscriptions and to sign up for this or other *Booklist* newsletters, [click here](#). Your e-mail may be shared with sponsors of this newsletter should you express interest in their products or content related to those products. If the sponsors choose to communicate with you by e-mail, they are obligated to provide you with an opportunity to opt-out from future emails in compliance with the [CAN-SPAM Act of 2003](#). To read the ALA privacy policy, [click here](#).

Visit [Booklist Online](#)

Learn more about Gale

Booklist Online, [American Library Association](#), 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611

© 2016 by *Booklist Online*

ALA PUBLISHING | AmericanLibraryAssociation

Manage your subscriptions to *Booklist* e-mails [here](#).

If you no longer wish to receive *Booklist Online Top Shelf Reference* e-mails, please [click here](#).

To subscribe to *Booklist* magazine, [click here](#).

To unsubscribe from all American Library Association communications, [click here](#).

American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611

[American Library Association](#).

