



A History of Cant and Slang Dictionaries: Volume III: 1859-1936

Julie Coleman

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This book continues Julie Coleman's acclaimed history of dictionaries of English slang and cant. It describes the increasingly systematic and scholarly way in which such terms were recorded and classified in the UK, the USA, Australia, and elsewhere, and the huge growth in the publication of and public appetite for dictionaries, glossaries, and guides to the distinctive vocabularies of different social groups, classes, districts, regions, and nations. Dr Coleman describes the origins of words and phrases and explores their history. By copious example she shows how they cast light on everyday life across the globe - from settlers in Canada and Australia and cockneys in London to gang-members in New York and soldiers fighting in the Boer and First World Wars - as well as on the operations of the narcotics trade and the entertainment business and the lives of those attending American colleges and British public schools.

The slang lexicographers were a colourful bunch. Those featured in this book include spiritualists, aristocrats, socialists, journalists, psychiatrists, school-boys, criminals, hoboes, police officers, and a serial bigamist. One provided the inspiration for Robert Lewis Stevenson's Long John Silver. Another was allegedly killed by a pork pie.

Julie Coleman's account will interest historians of language, crime, poverty, sexuality, and the criminal underworld.

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