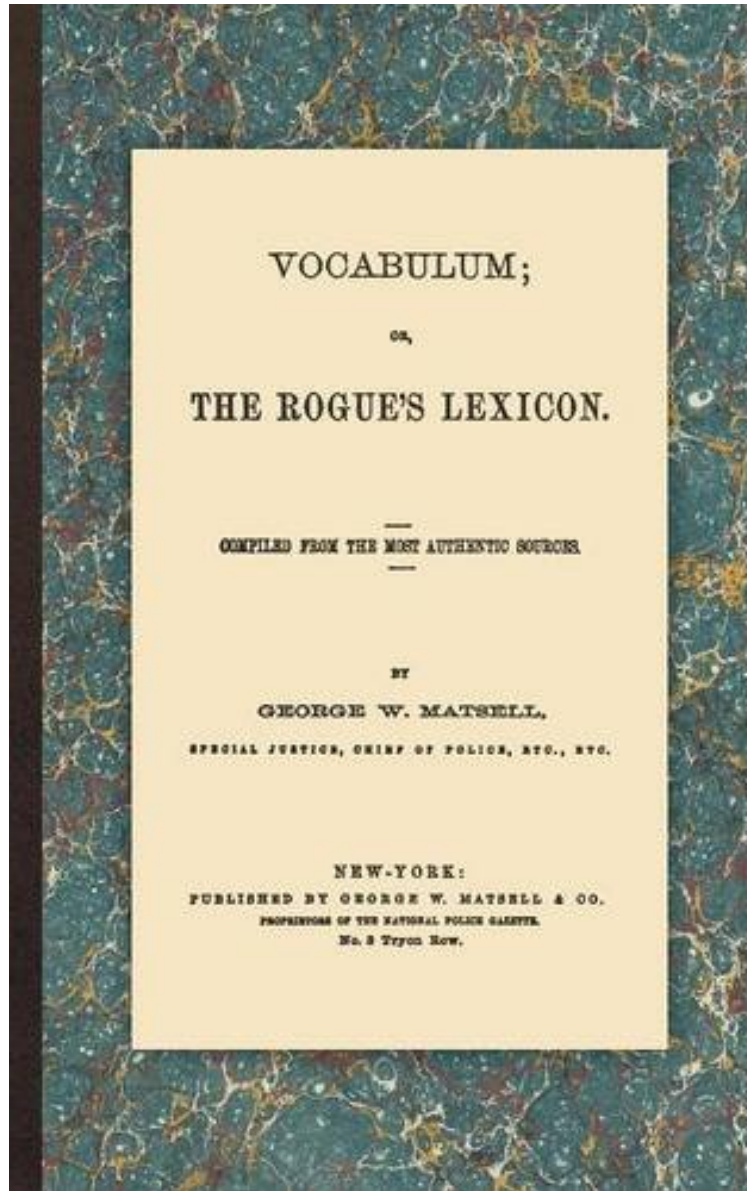


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Vocabulum: Or, The Rogue's Lexicon

George W. Matsell (Compiler)

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George W. Matsell (Compiler) : Vocabulum: Or, The Rogue's Lexicon before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vocabulum: Or, The Rogue's Lexicon:

Matsell, George W., Compiler. *Vocabulum; Or, The Rogue's Lexicon*. Compiled From the Most Authentic Sources. New York: Published by George W. Matsell Co., [1859]. vi, 130 pp. Reprinted 2005 by The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd. Hardcover. New.* As New York City's Chief of Police and an owner of the *National Police Gazette* Matsell [1811-1877] had an abiding interest in criminal speechways. Although Matsell compiled this dictionary for his colleagues in law enforcement, he recognized its value to the linguist. As he notes in the preface, criminal terms were beginning to enter general usage and appeared regularly in newspapers, court reports and other publications. Matsell's compilation includes such entries as "acorn" (a gallows), "hemp the flat" (choke a fool), "rumbo" (a prison) and "tyburn blossom" (a young thief). The appendix contains samples of criminal speech and writing (with translations) and the vocabularies of gamblers, billiard players, pugilists and stock brokers. Published just before the Civil War, this dictionary offers a fascinating glimpse into the American underworld in the first half of the nineteenth century.