



Law Library of Brooklyn

2nd Judicial District - Supreme Court

Self-Guided Tour by Bacilio Mendez II





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Sitting down and **reading the law is different from reading a novel or a textbook because the law has its own language**, but how you go about **understanding and learning the language of the law and law books** is the same as reading any other book, just as **this library is like any other library**.

When you're reading a novel and **don't know what a word means**, what do you do?

Look it up in a **dictionary**, of course.

And when you **don't know where a book is** in other libraries, where do you turn?

Yes, the **catalog**.

So .. if you're unsure about a legal term in a book you have picked up in the Brooklyn Supreme Court Law Library, where should you turn?



LION is the catalog of the New York State Unified Court System.

Click on the logo, or go to http://207.29.128.12/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=aaa_web, and let's find a legal dictionary for you to keep handy while you read the law here at Brooklyn Supreme Court Law Library reading room.

Where does the law library keep **books that will help you understand** the language of the law?

What is the **name of the law librarian** sitting at the reference desk today?



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Now that you've got your legal dictionary, and are **friends with the law librarian** on duty, you're ready to dive into the la. But the library has thousands of volumes **where do you find it?**

Ask the librarian **where the laws of New York are in the library**. The answer might surprise you.

What did they **say**? What are **the titles of the books** they mentioned? **Where can you find them?**

Let's go there, but, on the way, jot down some of the titles of **books that you pass**.



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We don't expect you to know what you're looking for in these multi-volume texts and, that's actually a good thing. Sometimes we librarians wish that we could start over again at your age and relearn how to see and think about the law.

You're **looking at the law with fresh eyes**, so let's literally **browse through the law**. But **how?**

Look **on the spine of the books on the shelf** you're standing in front of now. What do you see?



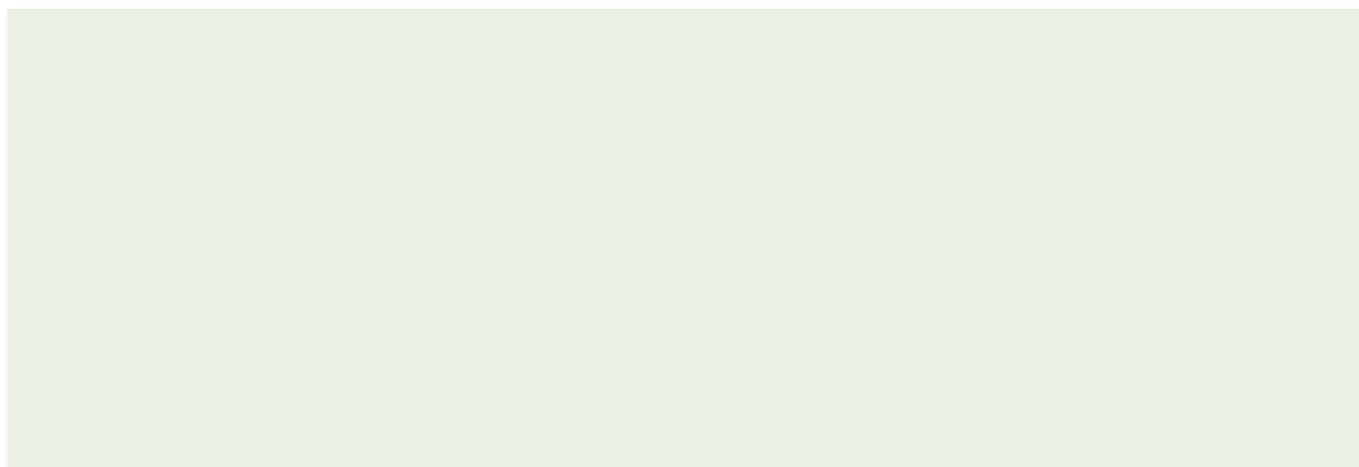
Those words on the spine of the book tell you exactly what is in that volume. **Those words are your access points to the law.**

Okay, but **you still don't know what those words mean, right?** Well, go ahead and open up a volume that says "index" and **turn to the back of the book.**

Pick a subject and **turn to the first page where that subject is discussed.** You'll find that just about **every entry's first section is titled "definitions" or "generally."**

Take the volume in your hand, and the legal dictionary you found earlier, back to the reading room and let's start unpacking the first few sentences below.

What do you think your chosen topic covers?





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Now that you have a better understanding of your topic, how would you go about finding **more books** on this specific topic? (If you've decided that you're no longer interested in this topic, feel free to choose something else that does, **there's plenty to choose from**, after all.)

Now, let's do it. **List some those titles below and let's find where they are in the stacks.**

If you're **still unsure** about what you're reading, or where to go in the library's stacks, **don't be discouraged**, the librarians are always **happy to help you out**. In fact, we have a rule in the **Brooklyn Supreme Court Law Library** we call **The 10 Minute Rule**.

If You Can't Find What You're Looking for After 10 Minutes of Research Ask the Librarian!

The **law librarians have years of experience behind them** and are the best resource the library has, so **please do disturb the librarian**.

This was just **a small introduction to the Brooklyn Supreme Court Law Library** to get you familiar with the collection and **pique your curiosity about the law** and legal research in New York.

Remember, **this is your library**; feel free to **come back, wander the stacks**, and **ask lots of questions!** The law is complex, but, with time and guidance, you can be a deft legal researcher.



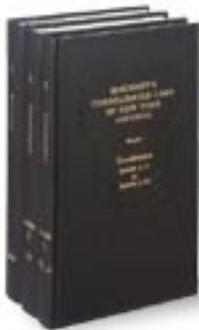
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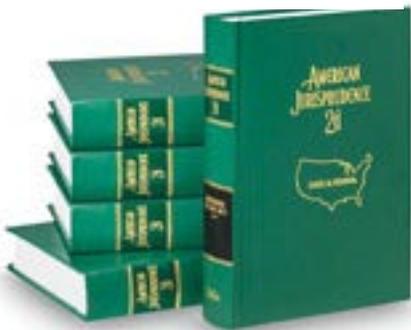
Book Hunt!

Is the law confusing? It can be. Are law books intimidating? At first. But they're also colorful! Who says you can't judge a book by its cover? Not us. Walking through the technicolor stacks, the books themselves are beautiful and, you may not understand everything in them just yet, but you can still appreciate them.

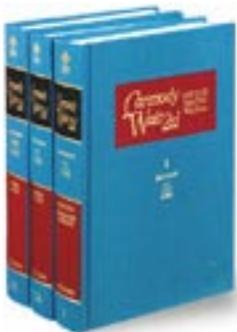
Go find the following books on the shelves and take notes on what they're about. You just might find something that you're interested in studying.



McKinney's Consolidated Laws of New York



American Jurisprudence 2d



Carmody-Wait 2d



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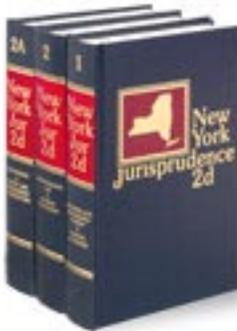
Book Hunt!

What **keywords**, in which books, catch your eye? Are there other books on those subjects?

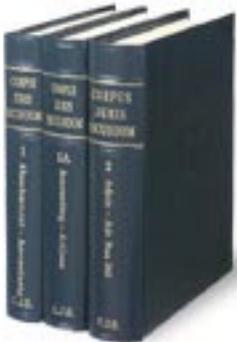
How are these books organized? Does every book have a table of content? An index?

Does **where the books are on the shelves** matter, or make sense, to you?

Which books would you consider **primary sources**? Secondary sources?



New York Jurisprudence 2d



Corpus Juris Secundum



McKinney's New York Rules of Court



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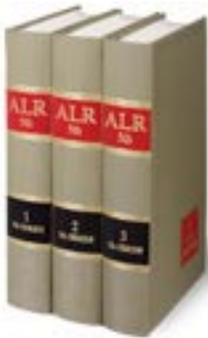
Book Hunt!

Many of the **book titles** on this hunt **have numbers after them**. What do they mean?

Some books look the same. **What is the difference between a state and a federal book?**

Why do you think the library chose the specific books?

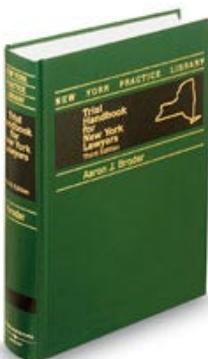
Which books **would you look at again?** Which ones might you pass over?



American Law Reports, 6th



American Law Reports Federal, 2d



Trial Handbook for New York Lawyers, 3rd



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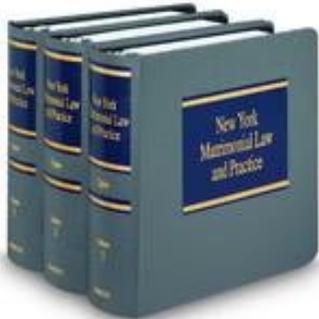
Book Hunt!

Why are some of the titles hard-bound and **why do some look like three ring binders?**

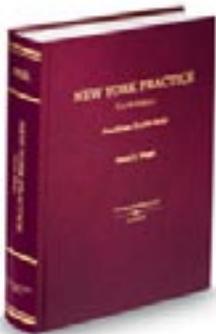
Why do you think that many of the books have “New York” in their title?

Are there **multiple copies** of any of the books? Which? **Why do think that is?**

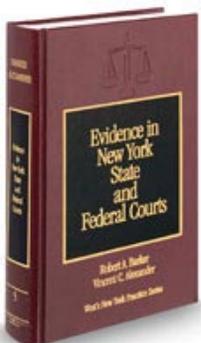
Is there any **one topic** that you feel the library is more **focused** on?



New York Matrimonial Law and Practice



New York Practice 4th



Evidence in New York State and Federal Courts



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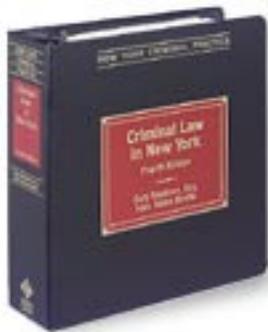
Book Hunt!

What do you think a **“reporter”** is? What does it report? Why is it important to have reporters?

What does it look like practice guide is for? Who is it written for and aimed to help?

Are any of the **books** on this hunt **available online**? Where and **how would you find them**?

What is an annotation? **Are annotations helpful**? How can they be used?



Criminal Law in New York, 4th



Supreme Court Reporter



United States Code Annotated