Literary Print Culture
The Stationers’ Company Archive, 1554-2007

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Primary sources for teaching and research
A DIGITAL RESOURCE
Overview

The archive of the Stationers’ Company is widely regarded as one of the most important sources for studying the history of the book, publishing and copyright. Originating in London in 1408, the Stationers’ Company is a Livery Company of the City of London and remains active to this day. The Company was instrumental in the development of the printed book in England, exerting enormous power over the publishing industry as it developed in the early modern period.

The arrival of printing caused a social and cultural revolution in late 15th century Britain. The Stationers’ Company was granted immense power by Royal Charter to control this nascent industry, requiring all works to be licensed and entered into a ‘Book of Copies’, in order to censor seditious and heretical works. The Registers quickly became used by publishers and printers to assert their exclusive rights over their publications, developing the concept of ‘copyright’.

The Stationers’ Company remained central to the development and maintenance of English copyright and publishing until the 20th century, and the Registers are an unparalleled resource for the study of print culture. These are presented in this digital resource alongside a wealth of other archival material from the archives of the Company, offering a comprehensive view of this enormously influential organisation. These sources are a huge boon for students and scholars of English literature, Renaissance theatre, and print culture from the early modern period to the twentieth century.
Highlights

- **The Entry Book of Copies (1554-1842)**. The Stationers’ Company Registers are the single most comprehensive record of all printed works registered in England until the mid-nineteenth century. The Registers provide much unique information about literary and dramatic works, especially in the early modern period. Notable entries include Shakespeare’s First Folio, entered on November 8th, 1623.

- **The Court Records (1602-1982)** are an essential source for understanding the workings of the Stationers’ Company and can be used to date texts, track editions, illuminate the lives of early printers and trace the establishment of book trade practices.

- **The Membership Records (1555-1940)** provide valuable biographical information on the printing and publishing community.

- **The English Stock documents (1603-1961)** record the activities of the successful publishing arm of the Stationers’ Company. The English Stock Company traded from Stationers’ Hall in books written in English and held a monopoly for many years over popular and frequently re-published works.

‘The Stationers’ Company Archive is vitally important for the study of the history of the book in Britain. This digital archive is indispensable.’

Dr Giles Bengel, University of Oxford
Literary Print Culture provides access to the remarkable archive of the Stationers’ Company, an indispensable resource for the study of English literary and print culture from 1554 to the 21st century.

**Key Themes**
- History of the Book Trade
- Bookselling
- Printing and Publishing
- Copyright
- History of the City of London
- Legislation and Legal Cases
- Search and Seizure
- Charity
- Company Employment, Membership and Finance
- Company Rules and Regulations and Orders of Court
- English Stock
- Events, Feasts and Ceremonies
- Stationers’ Company School
- Property

**Material Types**
This digital collection showcases a diverse range of material from the archive of the Stationers’ Company including:
- Entry Book of Copies (Stationers’ Company Registers)
- Constitutional Records
- Court Records
- Membership Records
- Financial Records
- Trade Records
- General Administrative Records
- Charities and Property Records

The official records are supplemented by photographs, ephemera and original architectural plans for Stationers’ Hall.

“The records of the Stationers’ Company archive are central to book trade history and more widely to research the history of printing, publishing, bookbinding and apprenticeship, almanacks, ballads and popular print, copyright and musicology.”

Professor Ian Gadd, Bath Spa University

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