

Digitization and the Nineteenth-Century Book: Traces in the Stacks



Tuesday, October 7, 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm Sterling Memorial Library Lecture Hall How are academic research libraries changing in the wake of widespread digitization, and where does this leave nineteenth-century books? Out of copyright, non-rare, and often fragile due to poor paper quality, these books are both richly served and particularly imperiled in the new media ecosystem; as scenes of evidence, they are at once exposed and occluded by the digitization of our library collections. In this talk, Andrew Stauffer, associate professor of English at the University of Virginia, focuses primarily on personal marginalia in copies of books in the circulating collections, demonstrating the importance of individual copies to our understanding of nineteenth-century books and their readers. A massive horizon of opportunity is now opening for humanists to trace the history of language, of ideas, of books, and of reading via automated searches and visualizations of the global digital library. Yet individual copies are under a general downward pressure in this new dispensation. Digitized archives will reveal wonders. Now, in concert with the digital transformation of the archive, we must also give sustained attention to the material record of nineteenth century reading before it disappears from our academic research libraries for good. All are welcome to this SCOPA Forum.

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