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The True University: Yale’s Library from 1843 to 1931

“The true university of these days is a collection of books.”
-Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History

Elizabeth James
Branford College
Professor Jay Gitlin
April 6, 2015
Introduction

By the summer of 1930, Sterling Memorial Library was nearing completion, lacking only the university’s 1.6 million books. At 6:00 AM on July 7, with a ceremonial parade of the library’s earliest accessions, the two-month project of moving the books commenced. Leading the trail of librarians was the head librarian, Andrew Keogh, and the head of the serials cataloguing department, Grace Pierpont Fuller. Fuller was the descendant of James Pierpont, one of the principal founders of Yale, and was carrying the Latin Bible given by her ancestor during the fabled 1701 donation of books that signaled the foundation of the Collegiate School. These first few books would be taken to a small room within Sterling modeled after the 1742 Yale library, to be placed on a table to symbolically recreate this moment. With a second gifting of the same books that had founded the Collegiate School and Yale College, Yale was to be founded anew as a true university. The parade of librarians was a graduation ceremony, signifying Yale’s emergence as a university that sought not only to transmit knowledge, as it had in the days of Yale College, but to actively create it. Less than a century before, in 1843, Yale’s first full-time librarian was moving the college’s considerably smaller collection of 12,000 books into what was simply known as the Library, a structure meant to protect books and keep them away from the impressionable young minds of the students. Sterling Memorial Library, with its immense reading rooms and capacity for 3 million books, would have been unimaginable. With Sterling, the library assumed its proper place at the heart of Yale, resulting in a dramatic transition from a building that housed a rarely used collection of books into a grand library acknowledged to be the physical and intellectual center of the university.

1 “The Moving of the Books.” Librarian, Yale University, Records (RU 120). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Box 134 Folder 1591.
The parade of librarians into Sterling.

The 1742 Room in Sterling, where the books were brought.
Pre-1843

The founding of the Collegiate School, later to become Yale College, has always been inextricably linked with the foundation of its library. In 1701, ten ministers met in the home of Reverend Samuel Russell in Branford, Connecticut, and donated forty folios, ceremonially saying, “I give these books for the founding [of] a College in this Colony.”\(^2\) Though now known to be apocryphal, the story aptly demonstrates the sentiment that books were essential to Yale from the beginning. In its infancy, the library was nomadic by nature, moving from the home of Reverend Russell to the home of Reverend Abraham Pierson, the first rector of the Collegiate School, in 1702. At Pierson’s death in 1707, the library moved to the home of Reverend Thomas Buckingham in Saybrook, staying until its contested departure to New Haven in 1718. The books were seen as central to the operation of the college, and the residents of Saybrook were unhappy to see the college depart to New Haven. At least 260 of the college’s 1300 volumes were lost on the journey, during which the citizens of Saybrook destroyed the bridges between New Haven and Saybrook and sabotaged the carts carrying the books.\(^3\) Finally in New Haven, the library was placed in a room on the second floor of the lone college building. Because it was the only room available for general college purposes, save for the college hall which served as a chapel and a dining room, the library was a hub of activity. However, those activities rarely included withdrawing books.\(^4\) It was more frequently used for meetings and small dinners for the trustees. The senior tutor, often a recently graduated student, served as a rudimentary librarian in addition to his other duties. His only responsibilities were to report to the library Monday and Friday after

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dinner and record who withdrew books. Even in 1718, the senior tutor was only allowed to lend books to students with the explicit permission of the rector. By 1723, the rules had been lightened enough to allow unrestricted lending to graduates and senior students, but all others still required individual approval. Junior and senior students were allowed to withdraw a maximum of three books for four weeks at a time, paying a fee for each book depending upon its size.  

The existing regulations proved far too lenient for Thomas Clap, who became rector in 1740. By now, the library consisted of 2500 books, mostly theological and philosophical in nature. After completely reorganizing the books and creating the first comprehensive catalogue, Clap instituted a strict policy of fines to raise money, which included a fee for writing in library books. Knowing that the books would be carefully examined, students wrote their thoughts on the pages of the library books, with topics covering everything from their name, the daily food, to critiques of the president. Clap was called, “an old Stiffrump’d Devil,” for his harsh punishments and fines. The fines were particularly aggressive, inspiring one student to pen next to an older piece of marginalia, “Oh Dagget, why do you do this, do you not know the fine is sixpence a letter?” One notable quote from 1799, written in William Sherlock’s *On the Immortality of the Soul*, said that it was “though a poor book yet at the same time is the bes that can be found in the library.” The library was characterized by being frequently out of date, due to the high cost of importing new books and the fact that the collection represented a chance

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6 Ibid.
9 Warch, "Graffiti Olde & Bolde," 40.
10 Ibid.
aggregation of donated materials. At the end of his presidency, even Clap himself grudgingly noted that the library had, “not many Authors who have wrote within these 30 years.” With no full-time librarian, books were accumulated only through outside benefactors, and the college bought no books during the first fifty years of its existence. However, Clap also worked tirelessly to find benefactors to donate more books, resulting in an increase of fourteen hundred volumes between 1743 and 1766. Despite his aggressive search for donors, he was also careful to censor donations, refusing any books that conflicted with Yale’s Congregational ideology.

The library remained in the original college building until 1763, when it was moved to the chapel. The collection was essentially stagnant for the next forty years, with the senior tutor standing guard over the donated collection, rather than seeking to grow it. In 1804, the library moved to the top floor of the Lyceum. Shortly after, in 1805, a professor was appointed librarian for the first time. Professor James Luce Kingsley, scholar of Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Mathematics, was chosen, his duties as librarian intended to be subordinate to his teaching duties. While the library now had a more knowledgeable caretaker, Kingsley hoarded library funds, and he kept the collection small. The library was only open a handful of hours each week, and was only open to juniors and seniors for an hour each on Monday and Thursday. To even withdraw a book from the college library, a student had to place $5 on hold as a bond with the librarian, to be refunded if the book was found to be in acceptable condition upon its return.

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However, two additional libraries, belonging to the student literary societies, had been created in the forty-year interim. Students found the college library inadequate for their needs, and founded literary societies that established libraries as one of their main purposes. The first literary society, Linonia, was founded in 1753 as a club for debate and discussion of literature. It was joined by Brothers in Unity in 1783, after a dispute within Linonia as to who should assume leadership. In order to conduct research for their papers and debates, the literary societies needed books that the college library did not provide, collecting volumes of general literature, history, and modern periodicals. While the official curriculum remained extraordinarily rigid, the student body built a rich extracurriculum through the literary societies that allowed them to explore subjects that would normally have no place in the college. Additionally, the lending policies were far more liberal. Members of the literary societies paid yearly dues so that the society librarian could buy books that the members requested. An individual could join one society and borrow from them all, for periods ranging from two weeks to a month. By exploring a diverse range of subjects, many of which would not be taught within the college for several decades, the students created a vibrant intellectual community within a college system that had little room for such matters. Historian James McLachlan even went so far as to call the societies, “colleges within colleges,” for their educational value to students. The classical curriculum, with its texts and their interpretations already set in stone, gave students little room

18 Harding, “College Literary Societies…1815-40.” 8.
20 Harding, ”College Literary Societies…1815-40.” 8.
for innovation. Literary societies, in comparison, were centers of intellectual activity, while the classroom was better at molding character through rigorous recitations. Research papers, debates, and literary exercises gave vitality to intellectual life within the college. The societies provided a place where student voices and opinions could be heard, and their questions or thoughts about the world around them interrogated by their classmates.

While students expanded the unofficial curriculum, embracing books that challenged the classical system, the official seeds of reform were planted in 1819 by George Ticknor and Edward Everett, the first Americans to attend a German university for advanced study. They returned to Harvard praising the high standards of German scholarship, the intellectual freedom of the teacher and scholar, and the all-consuming interest in learning and research. Reformers proposed that colleges become both more democratic and intellectual. The stated purpose of the college was to provide the student “discipline and furniture of the mind,” as a building block upon which to base future knowledge. The classical system provided a way to facilitate these aims, forcing students into a strict curriculum of memorizing ancient texts through recitations, learning Latin and Greek, and as of 1805, learning scientific subjects. While Ticknor and Everett tried to promote change at Harvard over the next decade, Yale continued to uphold the classical system. As more Americans began to go abroad for advanced study, they discovered the

23 Harding, "College Literary Societies…1815-40." 15.
26 Ibid, 112.
28 Ibid, 12.
enormous libraries at universities on the continent, in Germany especially.\textsuperscript{29} With an increasing number of individuals calling the classical curriculum impractical and non-democratic, Yale, the bastion of the classical curriculum, was forced to respond. The Yale Report of 1828 defended the classical system, claiming that reading ancient authors created disciplined students who would be prepared to face any issue.\textsuperscript{30} The report implied that a single classical text was far superior to independent exploration within the library, with professors unable to believe that students had the intellectual fortitude to not be confused by conflicting texts.\textsuperscript{31} The authors of the Yale report acknowledged that even if they were willing to base future growth on the model of the German research university, the college was, “unprovided with the resources necessary to execute the purpose.”\textsuperscript{32} Yale, in short, remained wedded to the idea of a core curriculum and a pedagogy that emphasized lectures, recitation, and memorization. The library, in turn, remained small, with limited funds and equally limited access.

**The Library**

The true attribution of the original library plans have been lost to time, with architects Alexander Jackson Davis and Henry Austin both appearing in documents relating to the design and execution of the library building. In 1835, architect Alexander Jackson Davis was first approached by Aaron N. Skinner, a Yale graduate of 1823, to create, “a chaste & classical plan for a College Library.” The structure that Davis drew was a round Greek pantheon, featuring a dome with a mural, two floors of stacks for the main library, a series of basement rooms for the student literary societies, and a marble portico with Doric columns. With a glass-topped dome,

\textsuperscript{30} Yale College. *Reports on the Course of Instruction in Yale College*. 11.
the resulting building would have been light and airy, its circular structure unifying the collections. These plans were rejected in favor of a more traditional rectangular building with book alcoves, the elevation and interior designed separately by Austin and Davis. After raising $13,000, the edited plans for the library, of dubious authorship, were finalized in March 1842. There is no indication that librarians William Kingsley or Edward Herrick had any part in planning the library. After beginning construction in the spring of 1842, construction was halted in July 1843 for lack of funds, and the library was placed in the one complete section of the building. With a new library building under construction, the corporation realized they needed a dedicated librarian. Edward Claudius Herrick, a clerk in a local New Haven bookstore, was well known by the Yale faculty and was elected the first full-time librarian in 1843. Construction was restarted in 1844, and finally completed in 1846, costing a total of $34,000. While the administration struggled to raise money to complete the library building, the previous librarian, James Luce Kingsley, was in Europe buying books to fill it. During his 1845 trip, Kingsley spent $9,396, buying 6440 books and bringing Yale’s collection to a total of over 18,000 books.

While one alumni may have had plans drawn up for Yale’s future library, they were not brought to President Woolsey’s attention until 1839. It would not even be until August 18, 1840, that the corporation would even instruct the prudential committee to begin raising funds for a library. President Woolsey and Professor Edward Salisbury, a professor of Arabic and Sanskrit and lifelong supporter of the college library, donated one-third of the total cost of the library building.


Librarian’s Records, Box 5, Folder 33, Report from Jun 1845-Aug 1846.
The 1835 Alexander Jackson Davis plan for “a chaste & classical plan for a College Library.”

The new building was modeled after King’s College Chapel at Cambridge and featured a large central hall with two wings, each with two rooms of their own, on each side. The new library was critiqued heavily for its expense, but the decision to construct an unnecessarily expensive building in a time of financial strife for the college was a conscious choice. The library was a representation of the school as a whole, even if it was little utilized by any students or faculty. An 1847 article in the *American Literary Magazine* discussed Yale’s newly constructed library, saying that, “A college must have buildings of some kind, because there must be something to give the public a pledge of permanency of the institution—and something
that will be a centre of attachment for its members." Physically set apart from the other college buildings, the library’s ornate gothic architecture signaled a distinct departure from the comparatively simple brick buildings that dotted the campus. By choosing to build a library that was based on Gothic architecture, Yale placed its library into a much older intellectual tradition, attempting to make the comparatively young Yale appear in league with Oxford and Cambridge. The library building was a physical representation of the Yale Report of 1828, demonstrating a commitment to the tried and true classical curriculum that had been under siege in the past decades.

The fifty-one foot tall central hall contained the college library, and the two larger rooms in each wing held the student libraries of Linonian and Brothers in Unity. The two smaller rooms held the librarian’s offices and reading room, as well as the library of the Calliopean Society. Prior to the construction of the Library, the society libraries had been housed in adjacent rooms to the college library, maintaining their independence by never being explicitly housed with the
main library. But in 1846, when the library was completed, the societies were invited to place their libraries in the wings. These libraries were invited into the college library building as a sign of recognition that they were quality collections that filled a gap in subject matter. However, adjacency did not mean unity. None of the halls, save for the college hall and the librarian’s offices, were connected. The entrances for each could only be accessed from the outside. Each society elected its own librarian, who had the same duties as the college librarian—they oversaw book withdrawals, repairs, and acquisitions. The society libraries were far more active, producing more than ten catalogues of their collections in the first sixty years of the nineteenth century alone, in comparison to the mere two produced by the college library in the entirety of the nineteenth century. An 1851 description of libraries in the United States, written by Charles Jewett on behalf of the Smithsonian Institute, echoed this sentiment when he discussed student libraries, saying, “Dust seldom gathers on the books in such collections.” Notably, Jewett also said that Yale had student libraries of particularly high quality. Despite the limited curriculum and library, students on campus were actively reading and consuming literature. However, the main library failed to respond to student needs, viewing books as treasures rather than tools. The resulting library building held four collections: three highly used student libraries, and one

smaller, rarely used college collection. As of 1849, the Yale library had 20,515 books in comparison to the literary societies’ 27,166.\textsuperscript{44} With the library safely housed in a new building, Herrick’s first action as librarian was to expand library hours to four hours a day, minus Sunday.\textsuperscript{45} While this was an initial step in making the library more accessible, it did little to attract student interest without changing the acquisition and lending policies.

\begin{figure}
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\caption{Yale College Library}
\label{fig:library}
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\textsuperscript{44} Edward Claudius Herrick Papers (MS 691). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. 19ND-A-108 Box 5 Folder 33
In 1847, Benjamin Silliman headed the creation of a school for graduate study and the study of the sciences at Yale, called the Department of Philosophy and the Arts. Later called the Sheffield Scientific School, the department would award a Bachelor of Philosophy, rather than a Bachelor of Science as was the case at a similar department at Harvard. The new school was a way that the college could maintain its pure classical curriculum and also grudgingly recognize the growing need for scientific knowledge, though it would be tucked away within the Bachelor of Philosophy program. At Brown in 1850, Francis Wayland claimed that the colleges were becoming increasingly superficial, merely accommodating new subjects within the old

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framework and placing them in schools outside of the primary undergraduate college. This effect was further compounded by Theodore Dwight Woolsey, who became president of Yale College in 1846. Woolsey, who studied for several years at German universities, brought back with him the higher caliber of scholarship that had characterized continental institutions. However, he remained conservative. Under Woolsey, the undergraduate curriculum stayed virtually the same, while the scientific and graduate schools advanced. As a result, the library at Yale became increasingly inadequate for the purposes of research. Scholars remained heavily reliant on their personal libraries. Within the college, lecturing was emphasized over self-study, learning the same texts in the same rote way as generations had done before. Research and scholarship were not emphasized. Maintaining order was deemed more important than promoting potentially dangerous thoughts that would lead students to question authority. In such a system, librarians acted more as custodians who protected and guarded books than scholarly bookmen who facilitated the circulation of volumes and growth of knowledge. Serving a population of more than six-hundred students, not including New Haven citizens who also used the library, the library was primarily used by professors. In 1858, Herrick resigned, leaving a library that had changed very little, save for expanded hours. While he was one of the first librarians to actively

51 Ibid, 133.
buy books consistently throughout the year, if on a small scale that failed to anticipate student and faculty needs, Herrick did not encourage student or scholarly use.

After quietly serving as assistant librarian for two years, Daniel Coit Gilman was already prepared to accept the position of head librarian. A Yale graduate who studied abroad at German universities, Gilman split his time between the library and teaching geography at the Sheffield Scientific School. As a result, Gilman had a uniquely academic awareness of the library that Herrick, who originally served as a clerk in a local bookstore, did not possess. Unlike Herrick, who merely concerned himself with the main library rather than working with the student libraries, Gilman was acutely aware of the distinction between the libraries. To him, the main library was one of reference for researchers, a place where undergraduates did not belong. The society libraries were to be places of active circulation. Under Gilman, the college library was open from 8 AM to 1 PM daily, minus Sunday. While open for browsing every day, juniors and seniors could only check out books on Monday and Thursday. A $5 deposit, or a letter of reference from a faculty member, was required to check out books. Each book cost twelve or six cents to check out, depending on whether it was a folio or quarto volume. However, with the declining popularity of literary societies, these stagnant policies that had been in place for decades would soon change. In 1860, with membership declining and the large 12,500 book libraries growing too unwieldy for a rotating group of student officers, the Brothers in Unity and Linonian societies first approached the Yale faculty with the idea of a merger. Gilman drew up a detailed plan, to be sent to President Woolsey. He requested funds for heating the building in

54 Daniel Coit Gilman Papers (MS 582). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Box 4 Folder 3.
56 Daniel Coit Gilman Papers (MS 582). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Box 5 Folder 33. Letter to administration, 1861.
the winter, hiring an assistant (which he had previously been doing with his personal funds), and creating a catalogue. He also requested permission to set aside space for a quiet reading room, and to open the library for longer hours during the day.  

However, his letter would remain unsent. At the bottom of the letter, written after the original text, Gilman wrote, “Written July 1862. But not presented to the corporation because on hearing my purpose, Pres. Woolsey said there would be no use in doing so.” Woolsey had retained the increasingly outdated view that books, and thus the library, were not essential to the purposes of the college and were instead detrimental. President from 1846 to 1871, Woolsey believed that the expansion of knowledge, as emphasized by a well-endowed library, added only pride, rather than the discipline the college sought to teach. He claimed that one of the worst heresies within the college system was the perception that, “reading…rather than study… is to be the occupation of each passing day.” He also said that, “our…libraries…promote the growth of this heresy; and it is therefore our especial duty to counteract it.” The students who did prefer to read the texts found in the library, rather than the assigned ancient texts, “weaken their minds and their moral powers.” Because the college system emphasized instilling discipline and critical thinking skills in undergraduates through studying Latin and Greek, memorizing ancient texts, and studying philosophy, it was imperative that undergraduates read the right books. However, these select books were part of a core group that rarely changed, meaning that the library held books that were not only threatening to Woolsey, but also rarely used. As a result, all of Gilman’s pleas to make the library more attractive and accessible fell on deaf ears.

57 Daniel Coit Gilman Papers (MS 582). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Box 4, Folder 3. Letter to administration, July 1862.  
58 Ibid.  
60 Ibid., 81-82.
Frustrated, Gilman sent one last letter in 1865, outlining the current state of the library and its context within the college. Comparing Yale’s inadequate book fund of $1600 a year to the progressive Harvard’s $5000, Gilman noted that Yale’s library was swiftly falling behind, saying,

…the recent gifts to the college indicate that New Haven is to be the seat of a true University…drawing men of letters and scholars from every portion of the country…without a much better library than we now have, the higher studies cannot be pursued among us. Scholars must go elsewhere for books.  

However, the administration was unconcerned with having a preeminent graduate school or an undergraduate college that emphasized research, so Gilman’s argument failed to provoke change. Even had his persistent advocacy on behalf of the library been effective, without adequate assistance, other than the one man Gilman personally paid for, the number of people using the library, “had already transcended our powers to accommodate them.” But until research and the creation of knowledge was attributed importance comparable to lecturing undergraduates on ancient texts, and listening to them recite their daily assigned reading, the library’s growth would be stunted. While Gilman was acutely aware of the potential importance of the library, he was unable to convince Woolsey and the rest of the corporation, resigning in frustration and disappointment after even his most basic requests were repeatedly refused. Woolsey responded derisively to his resignation letter, saying about the library, “The place does not possess the importance which a man of active mind would naturally seek; and the college cannot now or hereafter while its circumstances remain as they are give it greater prominence.” Clearly, all of Gilman’s efforts had been in vain. Gilman resigned in 1865, leaving the office of librarian

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61 Daniel Coit Gilman Papers (MS 582). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Box 4, Folder 3. Letter to administration, February 1, 1865.
62 Ibid.
63 Librarian, Yale University, Records (RU 120). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Box 134 Folder 1591. Letter from Woolsey to Gilman in response to his resignation, 1865.
open. By adhering to the typically custodial duties of the position of librarian and relying on the conservative administration to make any major changes, Gilman failed to make the library an intrinsic and important part of Yale.

Addison Van Name, a scholar of Hebrew and philology, taught Hebrew at the Divinity School. While he originally wanted the position of the Chair of Sacred Literature, held by his father-in-law and former librarian Josiah Willard Gibbs until his death, his beliefs did not entirely adhere to the Congregational orthodoxy at the Divinity School. Van Name was, therefore, placed in a position that the administration felt would limit his exposure to students. He was named librarian. Although Van Name’s official duties were limited to arranging books, recording borrowed books, and other day-to-day library tasks, Van Name completely ignored these custodial parameters. Unlike previous librarians who had allowed a rarely active library committee to purchase books, Van Name took complete responsibility for acquisitions, only using the library committee as an unofficial source of consultation. Composed of five Yale professors in various fields, the committee was a remarkably inactive and stagnant group, with three members (Edward Salisbury, George Day, and Thomas Lounsbury) serving for more than twenty years each. The purpose of the Yale library prior to Van Name had been just as limited as his duties as librarian, restricted primarily to serving professors who were in need of the odd book. During this time period, there were few true research libraries. Scholars generally kept their own personal libraries, rather than being reliant on institutions. Professors, distinct from scholars, lectured undergraduates and did not need to do research to advance knowledge. They merely needed to adhere to the religious beliefs of the college and lecture and oversee students as

they advanced through the classical curriculum, using the same classical texts year after year. Mark Hopkins, professor and eventually president of Williams College, embodied the older style of professor when he said, “You read books. I don’t read books, in fact I never did read any books.”68 Keeping up with modern scholarship, an activity that would have required a comprehensive library, was not only uncommon, it was treated with mild disdain. The core group of texts, along with past critics of these texts, supposedly had everything within them that students needed to know.

During his first two years, Van Name spent nearly the entire amount available in the library fund, embarking on an unprecedented book buying spree.69 Van Name was rewarded in 1867 with the assistant that Gilman had sought for so long, Franklin Bowditch Dexter.70 In Dexter, Van Name had someone who could perform everyday library tasks, allowing himself to be dedicated to book buying and acquisitions of new types of materials. As early as 1869, Van Name sent out mass letters to alumni requesting materials relating to the Civil War and local publications.71 Needing a coherent way to organize these acquisitions, Van Name created a new type of organization called the Yale Classification. It was an idiosyncratic system uniquely tailored to Yale’s collection, and signaled a conscious rejection of the newly created Dewey Decimal System, printed in 1876.72 Van Name, one of the one-hundred and three librarians who

69 Librarian, Yale University, Records (RU 120). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Year from 1865-66, Box 5 Folder 33.
attended the charter meeting of the American Library Association in 1876, would have been aware of the new system.73 The Dewey Decimal System was divided into hundreds of categories in comparison to Yale’s twenty-five. Three of those twenty-five categories alone were dedicated to theology. Organization was one of Van Name’s weaknesses, and it would not be until the end of his tenure that he would adopt the standardized Library of Congress card catalogue.74 However, by even acquiring these unique holdings, Van Name began the process of turning Yale into a true research library, building what would become the foundation of a robust archive.75

However, Van Name still struggled to gain recognition and adequate funding. In 1868 Van Name noted that, while library use had quadrupled and the cost of books doubled, the library’s funds had only increased by one-tenth in the past twenty years.76 Echoing Van Name’s sentiments, one alumnus wrote, “The library is distressingly behind, and yet small as it is… it is so well selected as to be in some important departments, better than any we have had occasion to use.”77 Even Van Name’s careful selection of books was unable to make up for the college’s past deficiencies and keep up with the college’s present and future needs. With President Woolsey slated to retire in the near future, a new administrator who looked favorably on library usage would be gravely needed for any real change. Unfortunately for Van Name, the extraordinarily conservative Noah Porter was to follow Woolsey. After being selected, Porter voiced his opinion on the future of Yale College, saying that the office of the president “—demands a sympathy with the existing system of classical culture. The system, as a whole,
cannot and must not be overthrown.”

To Porter, the college was defined as the undergraduate school, while the university was composed of the graduate and professional schools affiliated with Yale. The collegiate system consisted of far more than just an education. It was a culture and a way of life, with the body of undergraduate students becoming, “a large family, sleeping, eating, studying, and worshipping together under one roof.”

The collegiate way established the basis for the nonintellectual purposes of the American college, embracing values that restrained the intellectual potential of American colleges. President Porter claimed that the primary goal of the college was to, “take into its keeping many of the…most promising of our youth, to impart to them better tastes, higher aims, and, above all, to teach them to despise all sorts of intellectual and moral shams.” However, the administration also desired to create, “a true university system, so extensive and complete that no student of Yale shall need to go to Berlin to study Oriental literature, nor to Rome to study art.” The college Noah Porter came into was growing unofficially in subject matter, with one alumni commenting that, “…While no waste is made of the old foundations, a great deal that is new is either growing up out of them, or is being quietly and judiciously built on them.”

The year that Porter was elected president of Yale, the future president Timothy Dwight released a pamphlet of his thoughts regarding Yale’s future. He viewed the transition from an undergraduate college with loosely attached graduate schools to a harmonious university, “the

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78 Daniel Coit Gilman Papers (MS 582). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Series III, Box 7. Clipping dated January 12, 1871.
80 Rudolph. The American College and University: A History. 87.
82 Rudolph. The American College and University: A History. 88.
84 Ibid. Clipping dated June 1, 1871.
one all-important work of the opening era,” decrying that the college’s past success had been at the neglect of the graduate departments. In 1871, the undergraduate catalogue was viewed to be so complete in “both method and ground traversed,” as to warrant calling Yale a university rather than a college. Porter was keenly aware that many people perceived Yale as a university, rather than the college that he wanted to fiercely defend. In 1881, he grudgingly acknowledged that Yale was a “so-called university” aware that Yale was a university in form, but not yet in name or function. However, Porter valued the collegiate system to the exclusion of all else. While Porter felt that, “the library is universally acknowledged to be indispensable…” he believed that the library was primarily useful as a source for professorial research. Its only service for students was, “to inspire wonder at the range of human achievement” rather than to serve as a resource. Porter saw the college and university as separate institutions, with the college being preparatory to the university. College was a place that was meant to form character and create a disciplined mind, while the university was a place for research and experimentation. By fostering the growth of an approved character type rather than the personality of the individual, the collegiate system at Yale limited independent exploration and research potential. Even the once flourishing intellectual extracurriculum was to suffer. In 1871, the Linonian and Brothers library was surrendered to the college librarian and the literary societies disbanded. However,

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85 Yale College. Some Thoughts Respecting Its Future. 1871. Timothy Dwight. [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the policy and organization of Yale University, its aims, methods, etc.] (Y51 1) Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
86 Daniel Coit Gilman Papers (MS 582). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Series III, Box 7. Clipping dated January 12, 1871.
87 Progress and Changes in Yale College in the Last Fifteen Years. A Report Submitted by the President to the Society of the Alumni, June 28, 1881. -- [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the policy and organization of Yale University, its aims, methods, etc.] (Y51 1) Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
88 Report of the President, 1880. 30.
90 Noah Porter. Addresses at the Inauguration of Professor Noah Porter, D.D., LL. D., as President of Yale College, Wednesday, October 11, 1871. New York: C. Scribner and, 1871. 70.
despite being under common ownership, the character of the society library was distinct from the college library, and it maintained the field of general literature as its own and remained the primary source of undergraduate use.\textsuperscript{91} The incorporation of the libraries finally spurred Van Name to allow freshman and sophomores to check out books from the main library for the first time in Yale’s history. Because the student collections were used much more often than the college library, a catalogue was published by the end of the next year.\textsuperscript{92}

In 1877, Van Name issued an unofficial report of Yale’s libraries, outlining its need for adequate funding so that the collection could be evenly developed independent of chance donations from donors. Van Name noted the need for a librarian to constantly keep the collection of books in advance of the curriculum and research needs of the faculty.\textsuperscript{93} The role of the librarian was to be essentially forward thinking, anticipating the needs of its users. Comparatively, the role of the president during the same time period had yet to become so far reaching, concerned more with making incremental reactive changes that failed to anticipate any future issues. It would not be until 1896 that the next president, Timothy Dwight, would first mention the need for an administration that would look years in the future and incorporate planning into the scope of the office. Van Name was constantly looking to the future, noting in 1884 that “One-hundred years hence we shall have at least a million volumes…” and that a library building holding 1.5 million volumes was, “none too large to enter into our plans.”\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{91} Librarian, Yale University, Records (RU 120). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Year from 1870-71, Box 5 Folder 33.
\textsuperscript{92} Librarian, Yale University, Records (RU 120). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Year from 1872-73, Box 5 Folder 33.
\textsuperscript{93} December 17, 1877, Draft of a Report on Yale Libraries [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the history of the Yale library] Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
While Van Name sought to build a quality collection, along with a building to house it, he was apathetic concerning student use. Arthur E. Bostwick (class of 1881), stated that he constantly used the Linonian and Brothers in Unity collection, whereas he, “practically never saw the inside of the University library,” until he became a graduate student.\(^95\) Similarly, William Lyons Phelps (class of 1887), later to become a prominent English professor at Yale, said of the library, “It certainly…had no vital relation with undergraduate life. In all my four years of study, there was only one course where we were actually required to go to the library to prepare our work; and… some of us resented this as not being quite fair.”\(^96\) Current faculty member, and later president of Yale, Arthur Twining Hadley summarized the atmosphere when he said,

> Down to 1885 the real research work of a university…was chiefly done in the libraries of the professors or special collections of enthusiasts… a professor could say, “I conceive that the chief educational use of a university library is to lend an occasional book to a professor who does not happen to have that book in his own library.”\(^97\)

Despite making great strides in creating a collection that scholars would want to use, Van Name failed to make the library accessible or attractive to students. Under pressure from more modern librarians, Van Name attempted to record proper circulation statistics, failing because he was unfamiliar with the day-to-day work of the library. He was even unaware of proper cataloguing practices, leaving those activities up to the assistant librarian, Franklin Bowditch Dexter, and eventually, Andrew Keogh.\(^98\) In 1888, 40,600 books were circulated, consisting of only 9,923 from the main library and the rest from the Linonian and Brother’s library. According to Van

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\(^98\) Rollins, "Andrew Keogh: His Contribution to Yale," 55.
Name, from 1865 to 1886, library use had increased twenty fold. However, this increase in use was located nearly entirely within the student libraries, which Van Name continued to buy books for after their assimilation into the main library.

President Porter had proven to be the limiting factor to library use throughout his fifteen years as president. After his presidency, Porter published a small pamphlet describing the result of his “conservative” administration. Porter cited the modest increase in total enrollment, from 818 to 856 students, as being vastly superior to Harvard’s change from 803 to 1162. During the same time period, the number of graduate students at Yale decreased, going from 60 to 42. Despite advising the first student to be granted a PhD from Yale, Porter sought to keep Yale as a college, seeing little to no change as a sign that Yale was triumphing over the trend of educational reform that was sweeping the country. The large number of professional and graduate schools were comparatively unimportant, with the college taking precedence. Timothy Dwight, who became president of Yale in 1886, stated in one of his early presidential reports,

Within the last forty years the Academical Department has nearly doubled its numbers—a growth which is most gratifying, and as great as could by any means have been expected when we consider the fact that the development of what is often called the “scientific” education as distinguished from the “classical,” belongs wholly within this period.

Dwight had to look back forty years to be able to state this statistic, having to go past Porter’s twenty-five years of inaction and stubborn insistence upon maintaining the classical curriculum.

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100 Despite Porter’s conservative nature, even he had to eventually give in to the persistent reforms that had begun affecting many of the American colleges. The first relaxation of the curriculum came in 1876, when the junior and senior classes were allowed to pick one-fourth of their classes. Their choices were limited to subjects that already fell within the classical curriculum, including higher math, astronomy, logic, and modern and ancient languages. Schwab, John. "The Yale College Curriculum, 1701-1901." 10.
101 Yale College. The Result of Twenty Years of “Conservative” Administration. 1886. [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the policy and organization of Yale University, its aims, methods, etc.] (Y51 1) Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
intact. Porter was so effective at keeping non-classical subjects outside of the college that any students who wished to take science courses had to do so through a collaboration with the Sheffield Scientific School.\footnote{Report of the President, 1888. 29.} At his inauguration, Dwight boldly proclaimed that, “Yale College is to be a University,” and “That the Library…which was, indeed, the beginning of our College, is to be and must be a central thing in the growing University, is clear to all.”\footnote{Timothy Dwight. \textit{Addresses at the Induction of Professor Timothy Dwight, as President of Yale College, Thursday, July 1, 1886}. 1886. 38 and 20.} Though reform would be a central tenet throughout Dwight’s presidency, he was an extraordinarily cautious man who saw little reason to stray far from the tried and true college system.\footnote{Laurence R. Veysey. \textit{The Emergence of the American University}. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965. 235.} Despite renaming Yale College as Yale University in 1887, Yale would be a university in name alone for the next several decades.\footnote{Kenneth J. Brough. \textit{Scholar’s Workshop}. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953. 67.}

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Chittenden Library
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A chance donation of $200,000 by Simeon Chittenden in 1888 finally gave Van Name the funds he desperately needed to build a library building. With the Old Library built to hold 40,000 volumes and actually holding 180,000, Chittenden Library allowed the pressure on the Old Library to be alleviated. Planned under Addison Van Name, who had by this point been Yale’s librarian for twenty-five years, the library was tailor-made to fit the growing library’s needs. Intentionally an incomplete building, Chittenden was the first of several buildings meant to replace the Old Library, with multiple future expansions planned. Because the Old Library was still considered serviceable, despite its outdated alcove design, it was still used to hold books. Both libraries were connected by an above ground passageway, so that books could be transported by librarians without going outside. Library theory and use had advanced in the roughly forty-five years since the Old Library was built. Most notable was the acknowledgment that students actually wanted and were beginning to need to use the library. What was once in the Old Library a small reading room, with perhaps room for twenty readers at most, was replaced by Chittenden’s large reading room. However, even this advancement was a minor one. Chittenden only had room for ninety readers, and the year it opened Yale had 1477 students, of whom 736 were undergraduates. Instead of being placed at the back of the building, guarded by a vigilant librarian, the reading room and its ten thousand reference books was the first room students saw as they entered the building. However, unlike the Old Library with its limited collection, students no longer had immediate access to the books themselves, save for the reference volumes outside of the stacks. Instead, Chittenden created a new reliance on the

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librarian as a guardian and a gatekeeper, who emphasized the protection of books over their use by students.\textsuperscript{112} Van Name’s system of Yale classification differed between the main library and the Linonian and Brother’s library, which would have rendered students unable to find books easily even if they had been granted access.\textsuperscript{113} Hadley remarked, “In the days of the ‘Old Library,’ … everybody was given free access to the shelves; and the deficiencies of the catalogue or of the service were made up by the facilities given to each man to see and handle the books for himself.”\textsuperscript{114} Chittenden was constructed without interior lighting of any sort, reliant entirely on the sun as a source of illumination.\textsuperscript{115} As a result, the number of hours the library was open was seasonal, dependent on the time of the rising and setting of the sun. In response to student protest, gas lights were installed in 1891 and electric lights in 1896, allowing library hours to be extended until 9:00 PM.\textsuperscript{116} Similarly, in 1895, the Junior Promenade Committee raised $500 to keep the Linonian and Brothers library open on Sunday. However, this devotion to reading and intellectual curiosity was the exception, not the norm. Henry Seidel Canby (class of 1899) noted the tendency for students coming to Yale to prefer to learn not from books and professors how to be a scholar, but instead learn from each other how to succeed in life. Canby called the resulting division between the city of New Haven, professors, and students, “town, gown, and sweater.”\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{112} O’Connor, “The Yale University Library, 1865-1931,” 250.
\textsuperscript{113} O’Connor, “The Yale University Library, 1865-1931,” 369.
\textsuperscript{114} Report of the President, 1910. 14.
An omen of future complaints to be lodged against Sterling Memorial library, an anonymous pamphlet written in honor of the new building’s completion in 1890 praised the architecture of the building for its truthfulness of purpose, unlike the glorified chapel that was now called the Old Library. It stated that the new library, “…is not an architectural mask… and is entirely free from useless or meretricious features.” Written before the Tiffany window of Education was installed in the reading room, the author would likely have looked unfavorably on its addition. Sumptuously ornate, the Tiffany window depicted academic principles as angels.

with an angel representing light, love, and life holding a book at the center of the scene. However, the angel is not deeply engaged with studying the book, as the students within the reading room would be doing. She is instead gazing upwards, her index finger raised and pointing to heaven, as though seeking divine inspiration in her studies. Lodged between angels representing science (flanked by research, intuition, devotion, labor, and truth) and religion (flanked by reverence, purity, faith, hope, and inspiration), the central figure aptly demonstrates that Yale was at a crossroads, where it would have to choose between the objective nature of science and research, or the ineffable characteristics of faith and divine inspiration. While the window attempts to unite the two disciplines harmoniously, with religion as the inspiration and motive behind the scientific search for truth, the window’s relevance to the current situation facing the library would not escaped Van Name’s notice.
At the opening of Chittenden, President Dwight stated that, “The central point of the intellectual life of a university is its library.”\textsuperscript{119} This statement echoed the sentiments expressed at a St. Louis Library Conference the year before, when it was already assumed that, “as the library is the heart of the university, it should be given a central position from which the other buildings radiate.”\textsuperscript{120} The library was beginning to be recognized as the one uniting factor for the university, combining graduate, undergraduate, and professional interests under one roof.

The Library…. is the one common interest of the whole institution, the heart of university life. The welfare and the progress of every department are bound up with it. They depend upon it…for their nutriment. If it is suffered to languish, a blight is inflicted upon the whole academic community.\textsuperscript{121}

However, it would not be until the end of his tenure that Dwight truly began to contemplate the nature and purpose of Yale as a university. Despite proclaiming early in his presidency that Yale was to be a university, Dwight never really defined what a university was to be, primarily using his yearly reports as a way to beg for money, generally without success. He repeatedly said that the needs of the library were to have “special prominence” and that “Every section of the institution…must suffer injury if the Library is arrested in its development.”\textsuperscript{122} However, he did

\textsuperscript{119} Address of President Dwight at the Opening of the Chittenden Library Building. [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the history of the Yale library] Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. 10.
\textsuperscript{121} “The Library of Yale University” [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the history of the Yale library] Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
\textsuperscript{122} Report of the President, 1893. 87.
little to actually back up these statements. Yale at the end of the nineteenth century was a national institution whose administration had already outgrown its regional roots. A singular president with complete oversight was no longer adequate for a university of 2600 students. Dwight acknowledged the need for a central administrative body in his 1896 president’s report, writing that,

The special duty pertaining to the central office of administration in a great University is to take a comprehensive survey of its present life, its needed development, its future possibilities, and the method and means of securing the fulfillment of what is desired…these visions must extend over the years.\(^{123}\)

Finally, after ten years as president, Dwight was able to decisively proclaim, “The growth of the institution is to be, not the growth of a college, but of a University.”\(^{124}\) Despite spearheading the campaign for Yale College to be renamed Yale University, Dwight had continually treated the institution as a college. Though he understood that individual departments needed additional funding to conduct proper research, he did not facilitate any of these activities or reform the curriculum in any significant way to encourage student engagement with research and advanced scholarship. He remained stolidly moderate, making minor changes that would pave the way for Hadley and Angell’s more influential reforms in the future.\(^{125}\) Two years shy of Yale’s bicentennial, Dwight retired, leaving the presidency to Yale’s first lay president, Arthur Twining Hadley.

In 1901, John Schwab, a professor of political economy and the future university librarian, summarized the lack of change that had characterized the college previously, saying, “The history of the Yale College curriculum, as we know it, is the history of the successive

\(^{123}\) Report of the President, 1896. 98.  
\(^{124}\) Report of the President, 1896. 102.  
textbooks used by the students in the classroom, and of the gradual…growth of the so-called elective system.”¹²⁶ However, in the same year, Hadley proudly proclaimed, “The old principle of a fixed curriculum has been entirely abandoned.”¹²⁷ The new system, which created majors, required that students progress through progressively advanced classes of A, B, and C level, with C being the highest. In C level classes, students did not use textbooks, instead conducting their own research and writing a thesis. Professors were required to announce regular consultation hours within the library and keep a current bibliography of their field updated for student and researcher use.¹²⁸ Despite these advances which emphasized the use of the library and primary sources, by 1903, academic conditions had degraded to the point that seniors required an hour or less of work each day to prepare for class.¹²⁹ While the A-B-C system theoretically encouraged a more thorough exploration of a subject, students failed to take the system seriously, choosing the easiest courses and majors that did not emphasize research.¹³⁰ By 1896, the library had doubled its hours to seventy-two a week.¹³¹ The library had an estimated 3-4,000 books withdrawn at once, out of an estimated 220,000 books. More than 700 volumes were on reserve at any one time, with the reading room open until closing at 9 PM.¹³² However, books could only be called until 5 PM, when the stacks were closed.¹³³ One of the last “keepers-of-the-books,” Van Name did not begin keeping consistent circulation statistics until 1900.¹³⁴ Despite Van Name’s

¹²⁷ Report of the President, 1901. 3.
¹²⁸ Report of the President, 1903. 49-50.
¹²⁹ Report of the President, 1901. 3.
¹³² Correspondence Regarding the Home Use of Books from University Libraries by Students (Dec. 1897) -- [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the history of the Yale library] Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
¹³³ Correspondence Regarding the Home Use of Books from University Libraries by Students (Dec. 1897) [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the history of the Yale library] Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
outdated approach to running the library, he was, according to the *Library Journal*, “a
great…assembler of books at a time when such a profession was little understood and when
buying obscure books for future users was an unpracticed art.”"\(^{135}\) The *Yale Alumni Weekly*
acknowledged the immense change at Yale that Van Name had quietly orchestrated; “It is not
too much to say that Addison Van Name belongs to the select list of the founders of Yale
University.”\(^{136}\)

Addison Van Name, during his forty year tenure as librarian, worked under four Yale
presidents—Theodore Dwight Woolsey, Noah Porter, Timothy Dwight, and Arthur Twining
Hadley. Their selection was indicative of the changes that the library would soon undergo, a
litmus test for the changing nature of the university. The transition from Van Name to John
Schwab was much the same as the transition from Porter to Dwight. President Hadley once said
that, “when he called upon President Porter, he usually found him reading Kant; when he called
on President Dwight, he found him reading a balance sheet.”"\(^{137}\) Van Name, as Hadley noted, was
an unrivaled book collector, who, “could do as much with one dollar as most men could do with
three,” stretching the library’s limited budget to its fullest potential.\(^{138}\) Van Name was a lover of
books, a man who was an expert at building collections, and cognizant of the university’s future
needs. Unlike the majority of educational institutions during this time period, the president and
faculty exercised little control over the library, save for the few occasions when it granted the
librarian funding to erect a new building.\(^{139}\) By surrounding himself with a library committee
composed of men whose advice and intellect he respected, he created not only a library, but an

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\(^{136}\) Addison Van Name." *The Library Journal* 47 874.
\(^{139}\) *Yale College in 1868-1886: Some Statements Respecting the Late Progress and Present Condition of the Various Departments of the University, for the Information of Its Graduates, Friends, and Benefactors.* New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1869. 17. *Report of the President*. New Haven: Yale University, 1888. 64.
archive, sending out several rounds of letters to alumni requesting pamphlets and miscellaneous materials related to subjects ranging from the Civil War to local history, creating a collection that scholars would want to visit to advance their research. However, Van Name lacked the administrative capabilities that the library sorely needed. For example, he never completed the library’s card catalog in his forty years as librarian, despite his immense efforts to create a custom Yale classification. When Van Name announced in 1904 that he would be retiring in the next year, the Yale Corporation knew that they would need someone suitable for managing the growing number of personnel and books that any new librarian would have to oversee, a far cry from the small staff of three that oversaw the library in 1876. Dwight’s parting words in his final presidential report demonstrated the immense change that had occurred within the young university over the past decade,

The university and the college should advance true scholarship… they should move their students, so far as may be practicable, to the attainment of that knowledge which is the fruit of such research, and which cannot be secured apart from it.

He went even further to say that this was the, “chief function of such an institution.” These goals would shift the emphasis of the college, adding in outside reading and research to the traditional student tasks of attending lectures and performing recitations of standard texts.

Linsly Library

With Van Name slated to retire in 1905, the administration knew they needed to select somebody with the administrative abilities to balance Van Name’s talent for selecting books. The perfect man was found in Yale’s faculty, the professor of political economy John Christopher

140 [Pamphlets, clippings, etc., on the history of the Yale Library]. Manuscripts and Archives. Sterling Memorial Library. Yale University. Mass communications sent to alumni.
142 Report of the President, 1898. 39.
143 Report of the President, 1898. 39.
Schwab. Van Name proved to be the Porter to Schwab’s Dwight, the literary man whose successor’s character was a sign of the changing abilities required by a library administrator in Yale’s transition to a university. Schwab was selected to make up for Van Name’s administrative shortcomings, outlined by the Yale Corporation’s complaints leading up to Schwab’s selection as head librarian,

The duties of approving book purchases and making regulations, entrusted to that [Library] Committee by the Corporation, it has fulfilled; the more important work of directing the policy of the Library it has not undertaken—nor has it been in recent years well fitted to undertake it. It keeps no records. It has shown no inclination to assume the burden of unearthing abuses which have crept into the library management.144

The library committee, with Van Name, had entirely devoted themselves to book selection rather than policy development. Despite never having worked in a library, Schwab’s keen business sense and experience in the field of political economy made him best candidate for the position of organizing the massive collection Van Name left. By 1905, Van Name had amassed a collection of 517,000 books, an increase of nearly 450,000 from 1865.145 Hadley noted that, “When Mr. Schwab took up his work, he found the Library inadequately housed, and behindhand in most of the provisions for its effective utilization. The collection of books was indeed far larger and better than anyone would have expected...”146 However,

As a collection of books, the library of Yale University stands in the first rank. This fact is large attributable to the genius of Addison Van Name, who as a book purchaser had few equals...The income at his command was inadequate; but he could do as much with one dollar as most men with three.147

Van Name would be the last librarian to have complete oversight over book buying. By the time Schwab took over, acquisitions had far outpaced the ability of any head librarian to personally

146 Report of the President, 1908. 31.
select and approve of all book purchases. An action that Van Name would have never taken, Schwab proclaimed that he was willing to decrease the amount spent on books to hire more staff, if it meant that staff “output,” or amount of work done, could be increased. Terminology such as that broke the library functions down into separate parts, much like a machine, allowing Schwab to streamline library services and internal activities. He called for the production of a manual, no longer extant, discussing library procedures in immense detail. Schwab also completed the catalog that Van Name and Dexter had worked on, no mean feat given that the size of the collection had doubled since Schwab took up the office. For all of his abilities in making the library usable by students, he was unable to increase circulation. The roughly 20,000 volumes in the Linonian and Brothers library received a fairly constant amount of use under Van Name, Schwab, and the future head librarian Andrew Keogh, commanding a yearly circulation varying from 20,000 to 25,000 withdrawals. Schwab’s approach to the library was characterized by an acute desire to increase access; “it is even more important for us to know and tell our clients what books we have than to make large additions to our collections. The chief effort of the staff is…making the contents of our Library accessible.” However, it was limited access available only to certain populations. Under Schwab, only 5% of undergraduates had access to the stacks, what he called a “rare privilege.”

In 1907, a mere seventeen years after Chittenden, a building which was said to hold books for “generations and generations” of future students, Linsly library was built. It

150 Report of the President. 1921. 30.
continued the plan set forth by Addison Van Name, to build in a row from the outside in, eventually replacing the Old Library. It was a building that essentially added to Chittenden’s stacks, rather than increasing any facilities or resources for the students. It served much the same purpose as a band-aid—a temporary measure that was only meant to give the library more space until an actual solution could be found. Yale had yet to receive the Sterling bequest that would allow it to build the Sterling Memorial Library, and it was quickly running out of space to place its acquisitions, now numbering in the tens of thousands each year. Where Chittenden had the luxury of airy, sixteen foot tall ceilings, Linsly took the form of a compact book stack, meant exclusively for storing books and holding the odd graduate class in one of its four classrooms.\(^{154}\)

John Christopher Schwab, the librarian after Van Name, though an excellent administrator, was not a man of books in the way Van Name was, and was unable to plan a library that had any new innovations when he was only two years into his tenure as head librarian. Save for the classroom space, the library possessed no new features. However, with the increasing rigor and professionalization of the graduate school, and to some extent the undergraduate college, the library would hold a new place as a center of research. Hadley actively encouraged this trend, saying, “The instructors and older students…no longer regard continuous work as a thing which stops… with the end of the term. They value vacation for the leisure which it gives investigation.”\(^{155}\) The library had responded to this change in academic rigor by remaining open all day during the summer vacation, a stark contrast to the odd hours a mere decade before.\(^{156}\)

Hadley penalized unproductive professors and made funding available for professors who

\(^{155}\) Report of the President, 1908. 31.
\(^{156}\) Ibid, 33.
needed to go on sabbatical. By 1909, Hadley required that all professors be involved in research. However, in 1910, Edward Slosson, a writer for The Independent, said that, “The professional spirit prevails in Yale Athletics, and the amateur spirit prevails in Yale scholarship.” It would not be until 1913 that Richard A. Douglas (class of 1913) wrote, “To take a book out of the library—legitimately—no longer brings ostracism.” He went on to say, “of course the reading is a bore when the reader has the mental curiosity of a codfish.”

Schwab died suddenly in 1915, leaving the library without a leader. After months of indecision on the part of President Hadley, Andrew Keogh was appointed head librarian in July 1916, the first trained librarian to accept the position. Having served for fifteen years under Van Name and Schwab, Keogh recognized that a successful librarian was to be both a scholar and administrator. Keogh advocated an awareness of self that librarians rarely had previously—if the librarian was a scholar, he must ensure that he has someone to take care of the business side of the library. Keogh, unlike Schwab, did not attend Yale, and developed a distinct preference for the graduate school as opposed to the college, saying; "While I still have a love in my heart for the undergraduate, I always have believed Yale's function was in a graduate school." Keogh changed the emphasis of the library’s acquisitions to that of a distinctly graduate character, which emphasized knowledge creation, rather than knowledge acquisition as emphasized by undergraduate collections. However, Keogh did echo the sentiments of Daniel

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158 Pierson. Yale College: An Educational History 1871-1921. 290.
160 Pierson. Yale College: An Educational History 1871-1921. 349.
162 Andrew. The Librarian as a Unifier. 3.
Coit Gilman, saying, “The library is primarily a reference collection.” Despite his beliefs, Keogh actively encourage undergraduate use. Keogh was the first librarian to actually interact with students, starting in 1902 with his graduate lectures on bibliography. His lectures evolved into courses in bibliography for both graduate and undergraduate students. One class proved to be so popular that the undergraduate students not only had no absences, but they also voted unanimously to increase the length of the class from one to two hours each week. This was a stunning testament to student interest in the library, especially since the course offered no credit towards graduation. Keogh placed the library’s quickly growing number of resources in the hands of the students, and trained them in how to make use of them. By 1928, Yale was emerging from the period of scholastic stagnation that characterized the last fifty years. In the past five years alone, the number of books removed by students had doubled.

The number of books, newspapers, and miscellaneous materials was so great that they had to be stored in all available areas, even those not equipped for storage. Newspapers were stored in the basement of Chittenden, lacking adequate shelving and lit only by bulbs hanging on the ceiling from cords, "which only served where'er they fell to make the darkness visible." Carl Purington Rollins, the university printer, recalled, “The only time I remember to have seen Keogh's composure disturbed was when a searcher emerged from this crypt with dust-covered hands and complained to the Librarian that he had used a whole box of matches in trying to find a certain newspaper. It required strong nerves on the Librarian's part to laugh that off.”

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165 Report of the President, 1922. 30.
166 Andrew Keogh Papers (MS 940). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Box 1 Folder 1. Discussion of bibliography courses.
167 Ibid, Box 1, Folder 10, letter from L.L. Dickerson to Andrew Keogh.
168 Report of the President, 1928. 68.
Combined, all of these features, “…were as exasperating to the Library users as they must have been to the staff.”  Even as inadequately housed as it was, in 1924, President Angell called the library, “a rich storehouse for knowledge…Yale’s greatest offering to scholars.” Under Keogh, the library was finally a place that actively encouraged student usage. Gone were the beliefs held by Van Name and Franklin Bowditch Dexter, where, according to University Printer Carl Purington Rollins, “The whole idea of the Library was that of a book depository, and Mr. Dexter wanted all books to remain forever undisturbed on their shelves.” By 1921 the number of books withdrawn from the main library had finally surpassed the number of books withdrawn from the Linonian and Brothers library. With a growing student body and an increasing number of library users, it was often impossible to find a seat in the main reading room. In 1924 alone, 5,433 books on reserve were issued 60,285 times. The increased traffic also led to basic issues of neatness and quality of appearance. When Anson Phelps Stokes, secretary to the president, gave a potential donor a tour of the library, he found it to be in a state of disaster, with, “pieces of paper everywhere, wastebaskets overflowing, broken chairs, and books on the floor.” In 1926, books were not only stored in the three main library buildings, they were also stored in the Memorial Quadrangle, Kent Hall, Sloane Hall, and Hopkins Hall. The official combined capacity of Chittenden, Linsly, and the Old Library was 640,000. By 1930, with the

171 Ibid, 140.  
176 Report of the President, 1924. 250.  
177 Librarian, Yale University, Records (RU 120). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Anson Phelps Stokes to Schwab on July 28, 1915. Box 65 Folder 917.  
178 Report of the President, 1926. 12.
opening of Sterling, these three buildings, along with a miscellaneous grouping of others, held 1.6 million books.\textsuperscript{179}

**Sterling Memorial Library**

During the nineteenth century, there was no overarching campus plan for the new university—buildings were erected wherever space was available, and for whatever department was most in need. This led to a rather scattered and unorganized system, where the library occupied a physically decentralized location compared to most university buildings. All of this was to change in the twentieth century, when in 1918 Yale received a bequest of $15,000,000 at the death of John W. Sterling, to create, “at least one enduring, useful and architecturally beautiful edifice, which will constitute a fitting memorial of my gratitude to and affection for my alma mater.”\textsuperscript{180} Andrew Keogh, though only in his third year as head librarian, proved to be Sterling Memorial Library’s best advocate, writing letters to the administration requesting the library be the primary memorial building built with the Sterling bequest.\textsuperscript{181} Completed fifteen years after he became librarian, the 1931 Sterling Memorial Library provided a carefully planned space where Yale’s collections could finally be reunited, rather than being scattered throughout several buildings, each with their own rules and restrictions on undergraduate use.\textsuperscript{182}

A year after the bequest, Yale commissioned a reimagining of the campus, aware that the collegiate approach the administration had thus far used was not adequate for planning a university. In John Russell Pope’s 1919 published plan, *Yale University, a Plan for Its Future Building*, Pope states, “The proposed Library is the centre of the New Campus dominating the

\textsuperscript{179} O’Connor, “The Yale University Library, 1865-1931,” 493.
\textsuperscript{181} Andrew Keogh Papers (MS 940). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Box 1, Folder 10, Letter from Andrew Keogh to the Yale Corporation.
entire University group.”183 The “New Campus” also called the “Central group” was aptly located at the center of the university. Pope’s plan to place the library in such a central location was a monumental statement about the importance of the library. The emergence of this kind of comprehensive planning forced the administration to examine the role of the library within the university as a whole, with the alumni advisory board stating in 1920:

A measure of the value placed upon an adequate library as the intellectual center of the University is to be found in the decision to make one of the chief uses of the Sterling bequest the erection of a new and thoroughly adequate University Library.184

Unlike the college libraries of the Old Library, Chittenden, and Linsly, Sterling was to be a library within a university that embraced active use and advanced scholarship.185 There remained, however, divergent opinions as to what Yale was to be and how a major research library fit in the conception of Yale itself. In 1920, after several years of alumni expressing their discontent with the poor organization of the university, the Yale Corporation’s Committee on Educational Policy voted in favor of a major reorganization, resulting in the grouping of all of Yale’s undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools together under one common administration.186 This unification equalized the feuding undergraduate schools, bringing together the previously separated groups of scholars.187 It strengthened the central administration, under which the graduate and professional schools had a new eminence.188 The

187 The two undergraduate schools—the central Yale College and the Sheffield Scientific School—had extraordinarily strained relations with each other. Because the academic entrance standards were lower, and the subject matter of the Scientific School was more vocationally focused, the Scientific School was seen as subordinate to the college, and Sheffield students were not even allowed to sit with students from the central college in chapel.
188 Pierson. Yale College: An Educational History 1871-1921. 490.
massive reorganization and reconceptualization of the campus occurred at the very end of Hadley’s term. While Hadley did encourage a growing level of intellectualism within the university, he was unwilling to make any broad changes under pressure from the alumni. What Porter, Dwight, and Hadley failed to understand was that Yale could be at once a college and a university—it could be both a great research university and an institution that emphasized undergraduate education. The year after the reorganization, Hadley left the presidency to its first outsider, James Rowland Angell.\textsuperscript{189} A graduate of the University of Michigan, Angell was an outsider to the collegiate way of life. Already a teacher and administrator, Angell brought intellectual enthusiasm back to Yale, with extracurricular activities becoming, “the side show compared to the big tent of academics.”\textsuperscript{190} Under him, the spirit of inquiry would replace the spirit of discipline that characterized the college previously. Hadley, a Yale man, was unwilling to make the sweeping institutional changes that the outsider Angell would.\textsuperscript{191} With its second lay president, Yale was becoming an increasingly academically motivated institution, its curriculum no longer focused on the strict formation of character based on Christian ideals.\textsuperscript{192} Calling the planned Sterling Library, “as efficient as a factory, as beautiful as a cathedral,” Keogh demonstrated the tensions between the empirical university and its religious past, the conservative and progressive, and the old and new.\textsuperscript{193}

Construction, by its nature, necessitates a reassessment of mission and purpose, with the beliefs and policies of an institution written in the stones and the layout of the building. Sterling

\textsuperscript{189} Report of the President, 1921. 10.
\textsuperscript{190} Pierson. Yale College: An Educational History 1871-1921, 491.
\textsuperscript{192} Margaret M. Grubiak. “Reassessing Yale’s Cathedral Orgy: The Ecclesiastical Metaphor and the Sterling Memorial Library.” Winterthur Portfolio 43, no. 2/3 (June 1, 2009): 159–84. 170.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid, 172.
Memorial Library, located at the center of campus, boldly declared Yale’s new dedication to the creation and dissemination of knowledge. The plans for Sterling were sent to eminent librarians at ten different institutions, including the Library of Congress, Harvard, and Michigan. Each librarian responded with his critique of everything from the shape of the dumbwaiters to the style of lighting, resulting in a final plan that was the result of careful collaboration by an academic community. The careful planning paid off immensely. It took only five to seven minutes to retrieve a book in the immaculately organized Sterling, a distinct contrast to the maze of tunnels that characterized the old collection of library buildings. During the years 1925 to 1930, the faculty budget of the graduate school increased at more than twice the rate of the undergraduate faculties. Sterling had forty classrooms in comparison to Linsly’s four, demonstrating a recognition that the graduate students needed close access to materials in the stacks. The floor plans demonstrated the commitment to access, with several reading rooms and an exclusively undergraduate library, named after the Linonian & Brothers-in-Unity literary societies, within feet of the entrance. However, it was access was limited and carefully curated. Other than graduate students, only juniors and seniors were allowed to apply for access to Sterling’s stacks if the nature of their work necessitated it. With its decorations depicting the rich history of the Yale library, along with the history of books, printing, and literature from the ancient world to the present, Sterling demonstrated a quasi-religious reverence for knowledge, the Alma Mater above the circulation desk (and pseudo altar) serving as a collegiate version of a Virgin Mary.

195 Brough, Scholar’s Workshop. 123.
197 Brough, Scholar’s Workshop. 54.
198 Ibid, 56.
However, drawn across from the library in the original Pope plan, was a chapel intended to hold the entirety of the student body. The architectural committee claimed that, “the Chapel and Library represent the educational ideals of the University,” and that placing them in dialogue with each other combined the intellectual goals of the university with its religious motivations.\textsuperscript{199} However, during the planning phase of Sterling, religion at Yale was swiftly decreasing in importance. Behavior in mandatory Sunday chapel was deplorable, with many students doing homework, sleeping, or failing to show up at all. Alumni and students claimed that this was a mockery of Christianity, and subverted the aims of chapel being mandatory.\textsuperscript{200} As a result, after 225 years of mandatory chapel, the tradition was abolished in 1926. Seating more than 2,000 students, Sterling subtly fulfilled the nearly-religious need for the student body to gather in one place, united in a common purpose. Sterling provided a new place for a kind of reverence in the modern university. Despite being a secular building, Sterling was built in the form of a Gothic cathedral, as an ode to the university, a “cathedral of knowledge.”\textsuperscript{201} Unlike the unique Gothic appearance of the Old Library, Sterling’s architecture blended in with the multitude of buildings that had sprung up on campus. The Hall of Graduate Studies, the Sterling Law School, and Payne Whitney Gymnasium, all completed in 1930, existed to greet Sterling when it opened. William Harlan Hale, a member of the class of 1931, wrote a scathing review of Sterling Memorial Library in the student publication the \textit{Harkness Hoot}. Claiming that the overtly religious and pseudo Gothic nature of Sterling subverted the true aim of transparency that a library building should emphasize, Hale derisively said that, “There is not one suggestion of Veritas in the Sterling Library—and for that matter there is precious little Lux.”\textsuperscript{202}

\textsuperscript{199} Grubiak, “Reassessing Yale’s Cathedral Orgy,” 164.  
\textsuperscript{200} Report of the President, 1926. 10.  
\textsuperscript{201} Grubiak, “Reassessing Yale’s Cathedral Orgy,” 159.  
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid.
cathedral exterior masked the true purpose of the building, Hale failed to recognize that, despite its trappings, Sterling was carefully designed for the pursuit of truth.

Prior to the existence of Sterling’s rare book room, Yale’s collection of rare books consisted of chance donations, poorly stored and rarely used. Filed under the “Z” section of the Yale Classification system, Van Name placed rare books and manuscripts in a locked section of the stacks. During the years of Schwab and Keogh, they were locked in the librarian’s office in the Linsly-Chittenden Library. Upon removing the books to Sterling, Chauncey Brewster Tinker, the Rare Book Librarian, found them to be, “…in a shocking state. They were, to be sure in a locked stack, into which nobody ventured. The books on the shelves were leaning against one another like lost souls, and gradually pulling one another apart.”

Even the criteria for what was

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rare was extremely subjective, allowing expensive and important publications to be borrowed and taken outside of the library. As late as 1928, Keogh noted that they had no real policy on how to treat rare books. On one particularly notable occasion, Keogh allowed a student to take a first folio of Shakespeare down to the photoengraver’s shop to have it photographed. The library would not have a set policy until Tinker was named Rare Book Librarian, with his own discrete fund for buying books. While love of knowledge is etched into every carving that graces Sterling’s walls, the Rare Book Room remains one of the most important physical declarations of the university spirit. It declared a devotion to active research, a testament to placing rare and unique materials in the hands of scholars who would otherwise be unable to access them.

Conclusion

The college library in 1846 consisted of a librarian who froze in the winter, an occasionally moldy collection of books, and a frequently empty reading room. Despite its initially impressive appearance, the library quickly became an overcrowded maze of buildings located in an inconvenient area of campus. The illustrious appearance of Sterling Memorial Library masked Yale’s complicated and frequently difficult relationship with its own library, a resource that came to be considered a vital part of the institution. Sterling Library signaled the conclusion of a more than century-long struggle over the proper place of the library on campus, and answered the question of where a working collection of core texts and specialized volumes fell within Yale’s educational mission. In 1915, the year before he became head librarian, Keogh delivered an address at the commencement exercises of the Library School at the New York Public Library entitled “The Librarian as a Unifier.” In his brief speech, Keogh extolled the dangers and benefits inherent in the library profession, saying, “If [a librarian] is not careful, his

204 Ibid. 314.
205 Rollins, ”Andrew Keogh (November 14, 1869 - February 13, 1953),” 140.
mind becomes a thing of shreds and patches, lacking in a sense of perspective and relative importance,” but that, “no other profession gives greater opportunity for unifying one’s work, and unifying one’s mind.” Sterling Memorial Library united the seemingly disparate schools and forced Yale to reevaluate its priorities and pedagogical practices. At Sterling’s dedication, Herbert Putnam, then Librarian of Congress, cut to the heart of why the library was so important, “It wasn’t really upon books that Yale was founded, but upon men; and it is upon books only as converted into men that she is being refounded daily.” Yale’s future graduates would be able to reap the rewards that came with having a great library, creating an intellectual legacy founded upon not only having great books, but great individuals who read them. Sterling Memorial Library not only united Yale as a campus, it also united its students and teachers under one roof, working side by side with the common goal of creating and disseminating knowledge for generations to come.

The 1701 gifting of the books, now carved into the nave of Sterling Memorial Library.

Word count: 12,307

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206 Keogh. The Librarian as a Unifier. 3.
207 Addresses at the Dedication of the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University on 11 April 1931. New Haven: [Yale University Press], 1931. 27.
Appendices:
Appendix A: The Growth of Books in the Library

The following information is taken from *A Yale Book of Numbers: Historical Statistics of the College and University 1701-1976* by George W. Pierson, chapter F-3.1 Growth of the Yale Library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Books in the Main Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>2450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>6500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>44,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>225,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>517,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1,250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2,036,405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This total includes pamphlets, which Andrew Keogh and John Christopher Schwab counted as part of their book totals, but Addison Van Name did not. The total is meant to place Van Name’s accomplishments in context with later book totals. The previous totals do not include pamphlets.*
Appendix B: The Yale Classification System

The following information was taken from a document headed, “Mr. Van Name’s Scheme,” in Keogh’s Librarian Records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notation</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>General Works, Learned Society Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>History (except American History)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>American History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Kulturgeschichte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Comparative Philology, Orientalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Classical Philology and Antiquities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Modern Philology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>English Philology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Philosophy, Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Comparative Religion, Exegetical Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Historical Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Doctrinal and Practical Theology, Hymnology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Law and Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Political Economy, Social Science, Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Mathematics. Astronomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Physics, Meteorology, Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Natural History</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: How large was Yale College, combined with its affiliated schools?

The following information is taken from *A Yale Book of Numbers: Historical Statistics of the College and University 1701-1976* by George W. Pierson, chapter A-1 Yale Enrollments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yale College Enrollment</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>502</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>555</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>1037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>1477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1190</td>
<td>2542</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1226</td>
<td>3286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>3822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1680</td>
<td>5915</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliographical Essay

I approached the summer before my senior year with a vague desire to write about Yale. Because I had some prior experience using materials in Manuscripts and Archives, I knew how rich Yale’s resources about itself were, and just how deep Yale’s institutional history was. Based on my separate interest in the history of the book, I enrolled in a summer course called “The Cultural History of Publishing: From Gutenberg to Google Books.” It was not until then that I realized that the history of the book and the history of libraries was an academic subject that I could study. Connecting these two interests, I decided that I wanted to write about the Yale library.

After arranging a slew of meetings with relevant faculty members to try and discover exactly what about the library I wanted to write about, it would not be until Jay Gitlin posed a simple question that everything fell into place. What was the role of the Yale library during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Sterling Memorial Library’s monumental presence on campus makes the library difficult to escape from. It seemed almost natural that the library would have always occupied such a commanding place on campus. Along with the fabled tale of Yale being founded with a collection of books, it was nearly inconceivable for the library to occupy any other space. However, behind Sterling’s carvings and stained glass windows was a remarkable past.

My initial primer for the history of the Yale library was Merrily Taylor’s The Yale University Library, 1701-1978. Though brief, it gave me a broad timeline and a list of library figures and events to investigate. Armed with some initial knowledge, I went to Manuscripts and Archives very early in the year to examine primary source material. Though at that point in time I was unprepared to go through the correspondence and personal papers of individual librarians, I
looked at a large number of collections of pamphlets and articles written for Yale alumni and administrators by various faculty members, including librarians. Because many of these clippings were reactionary in nature, they gave me insight into some of the issues that Yale and the Yale library faced, as well as responses to current events. The hodge-podge nature of these themed collections of documents painted a patchwork narrative, one which demonstrated some of the key moments in the library’s history.

But then, I read the title of Thomas Frederick O’Connor’s unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, *The Yale University Library, 1865-1931*. Worrying that he would answer the same questions that I sought to investigate, and in the most critical time period of the library’s history, I thought that I would have to change the focus of my essay. Fortunately (or, less fortunately for Mr. O’Connor), the dissertation fell prey to what I found was a common problem in most works on library history—it focused on the library, to the exclusion of nearly everything else. Because many of these narratives failed to discuss the tough administrative challenges librarians faced, the librarians came across as distinctly out of touch, rarely emerging from the book stacks to encounter the outside world.

In a similar vein, I found many sources about the history of American college libraries rife with generalizations. Each individual college proved to have situations that were too unique to write any sort of broad narrative history. However, by reading about issues that college libraries faced more generally, I was able to identify contemporary issues that the Yale library may have encountered. Without broader reading, I would have been unaware that Addison Van Name’s adoption of the Yale Classification system was an intentional snub of the standardized Dewey Decimal System, which was created a few years before. However, many of my sources
(Boll and Harding, for starters), did choose to focus on several schools and compare them, giving a deeper level of insight than if they had chosen to focus on college libraries more broadly.

One characteristic that Yale shared with many college libraries was a stunningly active set of student literary societies. At Yale, I examined the papers of the two main literary societies, Linonia and Brothers in Unity. The libraries belonging to the student societies would prove to be the center of student book use and activity in the early nineteenth century. While I did mention some of the high points where the societies intersected with the college library, the rise and fall of the literary societies is another story to be told altogether. The student literary societies provided an unexpected way of measuring student desire to use books, a desire that sadly waned even as the libraries improved. However, their dissolution left Yale a highly active library that catered to undergraduates.

Save for two of my sources (Grubiak and Gyure), all others neglected to mention the importance of the form the library took—because much of the scholarship was written by librarians, functionality was far more important than the form that the library took. These issues of form were extraordinarily important in the Old Library, Chittenden, and Sterling Memorial Library, where students would face architecture and decorative elements that were impossible to ignore. These elements were often chosen with educational philosophy in mind. As a result, I also had to read extensively about the history of higher education in America. While these books rarely mentioned libraries, they provided a way for me to learn about the educational philosophy that motivated librarians, who were commonly professors themselves.

Finally, I had gained enough background knowledge of Yale history and Yale’s library history to be able to contextualize each librarians’ personal papers and correspondence in Manuscripts and Archives. Using that personal correspondence, I was able to add detail to key
events, and gain an insight into each librarian’s thoughts and opinions about the library. Minus the handwriting challenges I faced when reading the nineteenth century correspondence, I experienced relatively few issues. While this is one issue that I should have anticipated, most correspondence was a response to what the librarian wrote, except in the rare cases where I luckily had access to the drafts of important letters. Daniel Gilman was a frequent draft writer, so I was able to read about the trials and tribulations he faced while advocating for the library. While there were frustrating gaps in time, especially in the case of Van Name, as well as earlier librarians who didn’t really write much at all about the library, the sources in Manuscripts and Archives provided exactly what I needed to piece together the librarian’s perspective.

By combining the history of higher education, library architecture, library history, and the history of Yale itself, I was able to gain a better understanding of the library as a dynamic institution that responded to outside influences, rather than being isolated from them. The Yale library was an initially small institution where an exceptionally interesting cast of characters was able to shine in comparison. Ranging from theologians to political economists and finally trained librarians, the Yale library passed through its adolescence in the hands of very capable caretakers, who brought incremental change into the library until it finally occupied its rightful place at the center of the campus.

On a final note, I would like to thank Jay Gitlin. His guidance has been invaluable, and more meaningful than I ever could have ever asked for. He has a happy talent for asking all of the right questions, and this essay would have truly been impossible without him. I would also like to thank the unceasingly patient individuals at Manuscripts and Archives, who assisted me in finding whatever ridiculous request I happened to have in hand.
List of Illustrations

High Street entrance of Sterling Memorial Library. Cover
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Tiffany Window in the Chittenden Library Reading Room 33 & 34
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Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, photographs, 1927-2003 (inclusive).
Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University RU 0696 Box 4 Folder 50.

Sterling Memorial Library commemorative relief of “Pledging the Books.”
Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, photographs, 1927-2003 (inclusive).
Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University. RU 0696 Box 9 Folder 103.
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