Yale's libraries have developed over a period of three centuries. Throughout its history, the University has devoted a significant proportion of its resources to building collections matched by few other universities in the world.

The Yale University Library comprises fifteen million print and electronic volumes in more than a dozen different libraries and locations, including Sterling Memorial Library, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Library. The library also encompasses an innovative Preservation and Conservation Department that develops and applies leading-edge technology to maintain the library’s diverse collections, which range from ancient papyri to early printed books, rare film and recorded music collections, and a growing body of born-digital works and resources. A student-curated exhibit program and the University’s emphasis on teaching with original source materials augment students’ access to the physical collections and study spaces of all the libraries at Yale, as well as to a full array of online and digital resources. For additional information, please visit http://web.library.yale.edu.

The Yale Divinity Library is one of the world’s great theological libraries. It is responsible for building Yale’s research collections in most areas related to the study of Christianity. The Divinity Library has particular strengths in the history of Christianity, biblical studies, and Christian theology (both historical and constructive). Its collections now total more than 600,000 bound volumes, more than 270,000 pieces of microform, and more than 5,500 linear feet of manuscript and archival materials. In addition, the Divinity Library has significant electronic holdings.

The Divinity Library traces its origins to the construction of the Sterling Divinity Quadrangle in 1932. At that time, three collections were moved to the School’s new location at 409 Prospect Street: the Trowbridge Reference Library, the Sneath Library of Religious Education, and the Day Missions Library. With that move, the new Divinity Library began to serve as Yale's main location for Christian materials in the fields of historical and constructive theology, biblical studies, and church history. These historical collections reflect a tradition of library service that continues today in the Trowbridge Reading Room, the Ministry Resource Center, and the Day Missions Library. (The collections and services of the Ministry Resource Center are described more fully in the chapter Other Curricular Considerations.)

The Day Missions Library is the most distinctive and strongest collection of its kind. It was established in 1891 by George Edward Day, a professor of Hebrew language and literature, and his wife, Olivia Hotchkiss Day. In 1932 the collection included more than 20,000 volumes—about two thirds of the Divinity Library’s original collection. The Day collection has continued to grow over the years, with support from the Day endowment and, since 1981, with income from a fund established by Kenneth Scott Latourette, a professor of missions. The Day Missions Collection today makes up a healthy percentage of the Divinity Library’s volumes and constitutes the bulk of its manuscript and archival collections. Its scope has expanded from a fairly narrow focus on the history of Christian mission to become one of the preeminent collections documenting the thought, history, and practice of world Christianity. The Day Missions Room—one of the most recognizable spaces in the Divinity Quadrangle—is home to a selection of the library's holdings in the history of Christian mission. Manuscripts and other restricted materials related to the history of Christian mission can be found in the Divinity Library’s Special Collections Department, which also houses materials on the history of New England clergy and theology. That collection was recently expanded by the acquisition of manuscript collections of Andover Newton Theological School. The Andover Newton materials included a large collection of Jonathan Edwards manuscripts that are now housed in Beinecke Library.

Resources found elsewhere at Yale bearing upon the work of YDS include approximately 100,000 volumes classed as religion in Sterling Memorial Library, with another 100,000 in the Library Shelving Facility. The wider collections contain a wealth of scholarly periodicals and publications of learned societies, the source material of the Protestant Reformation, Byzantine and Orthodox literature, early Americana, and older books acquired in the past. A primary collection of Mormonism is in the Collection of Western Americana, together with related materials. Other collections important to YDS are Judaica; the American Oriental Society; and the Lowell Mason Collection of Hymnology in the School of Music Library. Early English church history imprints and the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts and Letters are found in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. There is an excellent collection on Cardinal John Henry Newman and the Tractarian Movement. Christian art is in the Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library; archaeology bearing on biblical studies and Christian origins is found in association with archaeology, ancient Near East, and classics. Resources to support the various area programs at Yale—East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Slavic and East European—are invaluable for the study of missions, non-Christian religions and culture, and world Christianity. The collections of the University illustrating the monuments and literature of Assyria and Babylonia are housed in Sterling Memorial Library.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

The Divinity Library provides online access to specialized software, databases, and electronic texts for the study of religion, including the Atla Religion Database with AtlaSerials PLUS, Old Testament Abstracts, New Testament Abstracts, and Religious and Theological Abstracts. In addition to traditional reference and research support, every student enrolled in the Divinity School is assigned a personal librarian who is ready to assist with any research-related question, problem, or skill. Students are encouraged to contact their personal librarian whenever they need assistance using the library.

The Divinity Library offers a full range of reference and instruction, technology support, and spaces for individual and group study. Scanning and printing services are located in the library. During the term, the library is open Monday to Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 2 to 11 p.m. Special Collections is open Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:50 p.m. A campus
delivery service for books (Eli Express) and articles and chapters (Scan and Deliver) allows eligible library users to receive materials from other Yale libraries usually within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. Through the Borrow Direct service, the Yale community also has expedited access to the holdings of a consortium of large university libraries. For additional and current information, please consult the library's website, http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity.