

Gift funds expanded access to Yale Daily News historical archives



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Almost a century and a half of the Yale Daily News (YDN), the nation's oldest continuously published college daily, will soon be fully accessible to researchers online, thanks to a \$500,000 gift from an anonymous Yale College graduate and former YDN reporter. The gift will allow the library to finish digitizing past copies of the YDN since its founding in 1878 and—through the launch of a new digital platform—make it easier for researchers to search and find materials in the [YDN Historical Archive](#) [1].

As the primary source of news and debate at Yale, the YDN is published every weekday by its student staff when the university is in session. Many of the paper's student editors, writers, and contributors have gone on to prominent careers in journalism, letters, and public life. Among them are Perry Bacon Jr., William F. Buckley, Lan Samantha Chang, Michiko Kakutani, Joanne Lipman, Wesley Morris, Samantha Power, and Garry Trudeau.

The library began digitizing the YDN in 2008. In its first phase, many friends supported the project by funding a series of years of the paper's publication. Issues from the paper's founding in 1878 through 1995 are available online, and the new funding will allow the library to digitize and upload issues from 1995 to the present.

The new, more user-friendly platform, publicly launched this week, is already helping researchers. Susan Chen '22, an economics major and current publisher of the YDN, and her 15 person staff have been using the online archive to compile memorabilia books that offer each Yale class a snapshot of their four college years through the eyes of the newspaper. The new interface has made it easier to search through past editions by date, time, or keyword. Chen especially likes the ability to download a PDF of each edition, a function not possible on the previous platform.

Each digitized newspaper page displays crisply on the screen and the zoom-in feature can highlight smaller text and images. The ability of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to recognize text within images enables users to search for keywords within any article, image, or advertisement. Once an article is selected, the software can identify all the article's locations. For instance, if a story begins on page one and continues on page six, the entire article can be viewed together.

With about 35 yearbooks completed, Chen said using the YDN Historical Archive has been a remarkable experience. Through its unique lens, she has seen how the university community responded to major issues of the

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time, such as the Vietnam War or women being admitted to Yale. Recurring topics through the years, such as race, equality, and gender issues, have triggered for her “glimmers of the present” discourses. In addition to more serious topics, she also discovered some “hilarious snippets” such as the one from 1967 about a phantom foot nibbler in the stacks. “I’m so, so grateful to the library for taking on this project or else this history would be lost,” Chen said.

Billy Schroeder '22, a history major, has been using the YDN Archive to write a research paper on William Beinecke '36. He struggled to find primary sources until a librarian suggested the historical archive, with dozens of relevant articles from the early 1930s. He learned through the newspaper’s football rosters that Beinecke was a right tackle! “I couldn’t be happier with the archives and think it’s a great resource for the Yale community,” Schroeder said.

“This gift is already making a significant impact on researchers at Yale,” said [Basie Gitlin, the library's director of development](#) [2]. “We are tremendously grateful to the donor, who, as a YDN student reporter during their time at Yale, fully understands the value of such a resource to the Yale community and to researchers around the world.” A portion of the gift will form the nucleus of an endowed fund to support the ongoing costs of hosting and preserving the digital archive. To fully endow the fund, the library is seeking to raise another \$250,000.

-- by Amanda Patrick

Source

URL: <https://web.library.yale.edu/news/2021/05/gift-funds-expanded-access-yale-daily-news-historical-archives?page=1>

Links

[1] <https://ydnhistorical.library.yale.edu/> [2] [https://ydnhistorical.library.yale.edu/](#)