

**The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,  
Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 6

Finding Aid for

**David Willard Lyon Papers, 1904 - 1950**



D W Lyon Portrait

Credit to [Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota](#)

Finding Aid prepared by: Gregory Adam Scott, August 2009

Reviewed and Updated by Brigette C. Kamsler, February 2014 with financial support from the  
Henry Luce Foundation

**Summary Information**

Creator: David Willard Lyon, 1870 - 1949  
Title: David Willard Lyon Papers  
Inclusive dates: 1904 - 1950  
Bulk dates: 1920 - 1941  
Abstract: Presbyterian minister, founder of first student YMCA in China; Executive of National Committee of Chinese YMCA, 1901 - 1930. YMCA records and reports; Missionary Publishing; Confucianism.  
Size: 3 boxes, 1.50 linear feet  
Storage: Onsite storage  
Repository: The Burke Library  
Union Theological Seminary  
3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Email: [burkearchives@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkearchives@library.columbia.edu)

### Administrative Information

- Provenance:** An initial donation of papers was sent to the Missionary Research Library by Lyon in 1945, with additional material donated in 1950 by his widow and her daughter. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to [burkearchives@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkearchives@library.columbia.edu), or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. [Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials however are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying. When able, please use the photocopies provided in the folders.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 6: David Willard Lyon Papers, series #, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### Biography

The son of Presbyterian missionaries, Lyon was born in Ningbo 寧波, Zhejiang 浙江 province on May 13, 1870. He graduated from Wooster College with a BA in 1891 and an MA in 1894. He also studied at McCormick Theological Seminary and was ordained as a Presbyterian minister before returning to China in 1895.

He founded the first student YMCA in Tianjin 天津 in that year, and later worked in Jinan 濟南, Shandong 山東 province. In 1901 he was forced to escape the violence of the Boxer Rebellion and went to Korea, where he established the Korean YMCA.

He founded several publications, organized language schools, and published *The Christian Equivalent of War* in 1915. He served as executive of the National Committee of the Chinese YMCA from 1901 until his retirement in 1930. Lyon continued to work in East Asia until 1934, overseeing the operation of the Literature Promotion Fund, a project funded by John R. Mott. Lyon died on March 16, 1949 in Claremont, CA.

Lyon reportedly used the Chinese name Lai Huili 來會理.

### Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection largely consists of reports and writings related to the work of the YCMA in China, although other missionary enterprises are represented as well. It also contains unpublished material on Lyon's study of Confucianism.

The collection is organized in four series:

- **Series 1: Collection Information, 1945 - 1950 (Part of 1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**  
This series shares a box with Series 2, and contains correspondence and lists relating to the provenance of the collection.
- **Series 2: YMCA Records and Reports, 1904 - 1941 (Part of 1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**  
This series shares a box with Series 1, and contains records and reports produced for the YMCA, largely relating to its work in China.
- **Series 3: Writings and Correspondence, [192?] - 1944 (1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**  
This series covers more personal papers and publications related to the YCMA and other missionary activities in China. In this series Box 1, Folder 4 contains papers relating to missionary and research enterprises outside of the YMCA, such as English Baptist Mission, Gest Chinese Research Library, South Fukien Religious Tract Society, Shunhwachen Project, Canton Committee for Justice to China, and United Church of Canada Board of Overseas Missions.
- **Series 4: Lyon's Writings and Confucianism Project, 1923 - 1939 (1 box, 0.50 lin. ft.)**  
Within this series are some of Lyon's unpublished articles, research for his monograph on Confucianism, and draft copies of the work itself.

### **Processing**

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Previously unprocessed materials were added to the collection, and the folders were reorganized. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Any items in a more advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes.

In July, 2009 the collection was re-boxed. Original box and folder numbers, if applicable, follow the entry in the contents list in square brackets. Other folders were drawn from unprocessed archival holdings which were originally part of the collection and also from material which was originally loose in this collection. Further additions are possible.

In 2014, the collection and finding aid were updated as part of the Henry Luce Foundation grant.

### **Further Sources**

The "Records of YMCA International Work in China, 1890-1991" collection at the University of Minnesota Archives is the main repository of information on the YMCA in China, and has some material related to Lyon. The Kautz Family YMCA Archives, also at UM, has a collection of Lyon's papers.

The Missionary Research Library offers other collections that may be of interest, such as the YMCA and YWCA Records and other collections related to missions in China. For more information, see the Burke Library Archives website at:  
<http://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke/archives.html>.

## Contents list

### Series 1: Collection Information, 1945 - 1950

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	Legacy Item List for Lyon Papers, [196?] - [198?]
1	1	2	Provenance Notes and Letters, 1945 – 1950 [1.1]

### Series 2: YMCA Records and Reports, 1904 - 1941

2	1	1	YMCA Pamphlets and Reports, 1904, 1938 [1.27]
2	1	2	History of YMCA in China, 1907; Lyon's Report to International YMCA, 1907; Notes on Japan Conference, [1907?]
2	1	3	Statistical Reports, Correspondence and Summaries, 1916 - 1929 [1.18]
2	1	4	Reports and Correspondence re: China Christian Literature Council, Christian Literature Society for China, 1918 – 1936 [2.39]
2	1	5	Industrial Work: Pamphlets, Reports, 1922 - 1925 [1.29]
2	1	6	YMCA of China National Convention: Reports, 1923 - 1929 [1.7]
2	1	7	YMCA National Committee Report [in Chinese], 1924 [1.6]
2	1	8	Association Secretarial School of China: Meeting Minutes, Curriculum, 1924 - 1929 [1.2]
2	1	9	YMCA of San Francisco, Regulations and Policies, 1925
2	1	10	Sixth Student Secretaries' Conference Minutes and Report, 1930 [1.28]
2	1	11-12	General Secretaries' Conference Minutes, 1931 [1.3]; 1934 [1.4]
2	1	13-16	Conference of Commissioners Minutes, February - May 1932 [2.31-2.34]
2	1	17	Setting-up Conference Summaries and Reports, 1933 - 1948 [1.17]
2	1	18	Beiping YMCA Policies, 1933 - 1934; Proposals and Forecast for YMCA, 1934 - 1935; YMCA Policies, 1938
2	1	19	G. Sherwood Eddy's Campaign in China: Reports, 1934 [1.8]
2	1	20	Meeting with North American Secretaries: Minutes, 1935
2	1	21	F.S. Harmon Visit to China: Notes and Reports, 1935
2	1	22	YMCA of China Youth and Religion Campaigns: Reports, 1935-1936 [1.9]
2	1	23	Student Secretaries' Reading Party Report, 1935 - 1936 [1.10]
2	1	24	YMCA Refugee and Relief Work: Bulletins, 1937 - 1938 [1.12]
2	1	25	National Committee of YMCA of China - Reports of General Secretary to Executive Board, 1938 - 1940 [1.14]
2	1	26	Literature Program Meeting Minutes, 1939; Conference on Theological Education: Minutes, 1939
2	1	27-28	YMCA Staff Meetings: Minutes, 1940, 1941 [1.5]
2	1	29	Administrative Report by J.C. Oliver, 1940 - 1941 [1.15]

### Series 3: Writings and Correspondence, [192?] - 1944

3	1	1	Hundred-Year Timeline of Christianity in China" (中華基督教百年來傳道年表), 1807 - 1921, [192?]
3	1	2	"Research and the China 'Y,'" 1924; Addresses Delivered in Shanghai, 1928 [1.26]

**Series 3: Writings and Correspondence (Cont'd)**

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
3	1	3	Pages from Chinese Christian Periodicals, 1926 – 1927
3	1	4	Materials re Related Missionary Enterprises in China, 1925 -1938 [2.38]
3	1	5	Correspondence re YMCA in China and North America, 1926 – 1941
3	1	6	Plan for Conference on Religious Education, 1928 [2.40]
3	1	7	Financial Statement, 1933; Christian Student Summer Conferences, 1933 [2.36]
3	1	8	Correspondence re <i>Trends in Religious Thought and Practice in America</i> , Bibliography and Notes, 1933; Correspondence with John Leighton Stuart, 1937 [2.40]
3	1	9-10	Writings and Correspondence of Y.T. Wu, Plans for Literature Program, 1931 - 1938 [1.20]; 1939 – 1943 [1.21]
3	1	11	Reports by Hollis A. Wilbur, 1933 - 1935
3	1	12	Correspondence re YMCA in China, 1933 - 1941 [1.22]
3	1	13	<i>China Press</i> : [Shanghai] YMCA 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Supplement, Mar. 16, 1935
3	1	14	Completing Thirty-five Years of Service to the YMCA, 1935 [1.26]
3	1	15	Articles by Persons and Groups Associated with YMCA, 1935 [1.24]
3	1	16	Correspondence with and about William R. Lockwood, 1936 [1.19]
3	1	17	Correspondence with Daniel C. Fu, Letter to Lyon, 1937
3	1	18	Christian Youth Workers Retreat, Report by T.T. Lew on YMCA, 1937
3	1	19	Reports re Yenching University by Arthur Rugh, 1937, 1939 [2.37]
3	1	20	Mimeographed Reports Re War, 1937; “The Young Men’s Christian Association in China in the Midst of War” by S.C.Leung, 1938 [2.35]
3	1	21	“China Mail” [Publication of Foreign Division of the National Board YMCA], 1937 - 1939 [1.30]
3	1	22	Report-Letters by Eugene A. Turner, 1937 - 1940 [1.23]
3	1	23	“Fellowship Notes,” 1938 [1.25]
3	1	24	“YMCA Service for Chinese Soldiers,” 1938 [1.13]
3	1	25	Statement Regarding the YMCA in China by Eugene E. Barnett, [1938?] [1.11]
3	1	26	“Chinese Students in War Time” by Kiang Wen-han [Jiang Wenhan 江文漢], and Related Correspondence, 1939 [1.24]
3	1	27	“Local Student Relief Developments” by Lyman Hoover, [193?]
3	1	28	Student Secretary Outline, Work in Isolated University Centers, 1941
3	1	29	“Postwar YMCA Movement in China,” 1942 [1.16]
3	1	30	Post-war Plan for United Christian Publishers, 1944

**Series 4: Lyon’s Writings and Confucianism Project, 1923 - 1939**

4	1	1	“Some Atheisms to Which a Missionary Seems Susceptible” by Lyon, 1923 [2.46]
4	1	2	“Facing Forward in Japan” by Lyon, 1924
4	1	3	Translation of Inscription by Lyon, [19??] [2.43]
4	1	4	“Learning to Pray from Jesus,” Ms Notes by Lyon, [19??] [2.44]

**Series 4: Lyon's Writings and Confucianism Project (Cont'd)**

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
4	1	5	Biographical Materials, [19??]
4	1	6	"Research and Reform" by Lucius C. Porter, [192?]; Notes on Modi 墨翟, by Lyon, [192?] [2.42]
4	1	7	Draft Notes on Confucianism, [192?]
4	1	8	Articles on Confucianism, 1927, [19??] [2.47]
4	1	9	Correspondence and Notes Re Religious Values in Confucianism, 1927 [2.48]
4	1	10	"Religious Values in Confucianism" Proof Sheets Edited by Lyon, 1927 [2.49]
4	1	11	"Religious Values in Confucianism" Unabridged Ms Edited by Lyon, 1927 [2.50]
4	1	12-13	"Confucianism Today" by Lyon Ms Copy, 1927 [2.58]; 1928 [2.57]
4	1	14	"American Laymen and Missions in China" by Lyon, 1932 [2.45]
4	1	15	Quotations Collected by Lyon, [193?] - 1939 [2.41]