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Where Lost Histories Are Recovered.

PROVENANCE BRIEF

P-2025-0004

1958 Topps Football — Yale Lary

Detroit Lions — Halfback / Defensive Back · BVG 5 (Excellent)

Prepared by:

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Est. 2022

Prepared: December 2025

Packet Identifier:	P-2025-0004
Date Prepared:	December 2025
Set:	1958 Topps Football
Player:	Yale Lary
Team:	Detroit Lions
Position:	Halfback / Defensive Back
Card Number:	#18
Grading Service:	Beckett Vintage Grading (BVG)
Certification Number:	0006434657
Assigned Grade:	5 (Excellent)
Custodian:	First Custodian of the Reliquary
Status:	Permanent Archival Holdings

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This provenance brief documents the historical significance, authentication status, and custodial record of a 1958 Topps Football Yale Lary card, graded BVG 5 (Excellent) and held in custodial stewardship by the Reliquary.

Issued during the formative years of modern professional football, the 1958 Topps Yale Lary card represents an early visual and cultural record of one of the National Football League's most versatile and accomplished players. The artifact's importance derives from era, subject, and survival, rather than numerical condition optimization.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT — PLAYER SIGNIFICANCE

Yale Lary was among the most complete football players of the post-war era, excelling as a defensive back, return specialist, and punter during a period when two-way play remained common.

Career Highlights:

- Pro Football Hall of Fame Inductee (1979)
- NFL 1950s All-Decade Team
- Three-time NFL Champion with the Detroit Lions
- Widely regarded as one of the premier defensive backs of early professional football
- Known for exceptional field awareness, versatility, and durability

Lary's career spanned a transitional period in professional football, making contemporaneous cardboard representations especially valuable historical records.

III. PRODUCTION BACKGROUND — 1958 TOPPS FOOTBALL

The 1958 Topps Football set is recognized as a significant issue in early football card production:

- Among the earliest full-color football releases by Topps
- Produced during an era of limited print consistency and quality control
- Printed on comparatively fragile cardstock
- Highly susceptible to corner wear, centering shifts, and surface loss

Surviving examples in authentic, unaltered condition are increasingly scarce, with grades in the Excellent range reflecting typical preservation outcomes for the issue.

IV. CARD DESCRIPTION & SPECIFICATIONS

Set:	1958 Topps Football
Player:	Yale Lary
Team:	Detroit Lions
Position:	Halfback / Defensive Back
Card Number:	#18
Grading Service:	Beckett Vintage Grading (BVG)
Certification Number:	0006434657
Assigned Grade:	5 (Excellent)
Authentication:	BVG encapsulation
Era:	Pre-Super Bowl professional football

No evidence of trimming, recoloring, or restoration is present.

V. CONDITION ASSESSMENT & INTERPRETATION

The assigned BVG 5 (Excellent) grade reflects age-appropriate wear consistent with a nearly seventy-year-old football card.

Within the Reliquary's archival framework, this grade is interpreted as:

- Confirmation of authentic survivor status
- Evidence of period-consistent handling and storage
- Preferable to artificially preserved or altered specimens

For early football artifacts, originality and stability are prioritized over numerical grade escalation.

VI. ACQUISITION & CHAIN OF CUSTODY

This specimen was acquired in December 2025 via the secondary collector marketplace. At the time of acquisition, the card was already encapsulated and authenticated by Beckett Vintage Grading.

Since entering custodial stewardship by the Reliquary, the artifact has remained in controlled archival storage and has not been altered, re-holdered, or re-submitted for grading.

VII. ARCHIVAL SIGNIFICANCE

This artifact holds significance across three primary dimensions:

- **Historical Documentation** — A contemporaneous visual record of a Hall of Fame player during the NFL's developmental era
- **Set Importance** — Representation of the foundational 1958 Topps Football issue
- **Survivorship Value** — An authenticated, unaltered example preserved beyond typical attrition rates

The card meaningfully advances the Reliquary's mission to preserve early professional football history beyond purely commercial valuation frameworks.

VIII. ENCAPSULATION CONDITION NOTE (SLAB)

At the time of documentation, the Beckett Vintage Grading (BVG) encapsulation exhibits a minor hairline fracture along the outer plastic edge of the slab.

- The fracture is confined to the plastic holder only
- No evidence of impact, flexing, or pressure transfer to the card is present
- The internal specimen remains fully secured and immobile
- The BVG label, seals, and authentication markings remain intact and legible

Hairline fractures of this nature are consistent with incidental handling or environmental stress over time and do not indicate compromise of the authenticated specimen.

In accordance with Reliquary policy, the artifact will not be re-holdered or re-encapsulated unless slab integrity materially degrades or card safety is threatened.

IX. CONCLUSION

The 1958 Topps Yale Lary card constitutes a legitimate historical football artifact held in custodial stewardship by the Reliquary. Its significance derives from player legacy, era representation, and authentic preservation, rather than speculative valuation or condition rarity.

As an original survivor from the early years of professional football, this specimen fulfills the Reliquary's mandate to document, protect, and contextualize artifacts whose histories risk erosion through time.

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For the
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