



# CHEAT SHEET: Using Yearbooks for Genealogy

Thomas MacEntee, Abundant Genealogy

<https://abundantgenealogy.com>

## Yearbooks: A Great Resource for Genealogy

High school and university year books grew in popularity in the United States starting with the use of linotype in the 1880s. And as more of our ancestors extended their education beyond the sixth or eighth grade, we see them more frequently in yearbooks.

## Tips and Tricks for Using Yearbooks for Family History Research

Here are some ways you can use the information located in yearbooks from high schools and universities to improve your genealogy research:

- **Search Strategy:** Use Google as well as Google Books, Internet Archive to find yearbooks both in print and online. It also helps if you know the name of the yearbook – very often they had quirky names like “The Spectator” or “The Edge” plus the name of the school.
- **Home Address:** In the Seniors section, many small town high schools listed the home address of the student.
- **Great Photos:** One of the best aspects of a yearbook are both the formal senior photos as well as the many funny candid photos of your ancestors or relatives!
- **Lists, Lists, Lists!** Yearbooks are filled with valuable lists of students, their areas of academic interest, their clubs/sports teams/extracurricular activities, as well as lists of teachers, administrators, janitors and cafeteria workers and more!
- **Apply the F.A.N. Club Approach:** Review the entire yearbook, note any autographs and written statements from fellow students and instructors; note which students were in the same clubs or on the same sports teams. Understand the social circle of your ancestor in their youth.
- **Check for Military Service Enlistments:** During World War I and World War II, if high school students were serving in the military, very often there might be a special section listing their names, military branch and area of service.
- **It’s Not All About Seniors!** Remember that the “younger” student classes would often have group photos with identification of students in the yearbook.
- **Businesses and Sponsors:** Very often at the rear of the yearbook, you will find advertisements for local businesses as well as lists of yearbook sponsors.
- **What About Copyright?** Most yearbooks are NOT covered by US Copyright laws. According to the Ancestry Yearbook Donation form: “Yearbooks printed prior to 1963 and yearbooks printed prior to a copyright notice © are not bound by copyright restrictions.”



## Resource List

- ***A Genealogy Education is in School Yearbooks***  
<https://www.recordclick.com/a-genealogy-education-school-yearbook-memories/>
- **Archive Grid - Yearbooks**  
<https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/?p=1&q=yearbooks>
- **Classmates.com – Yearbooks**  
<http://www.classmates.com/yearbooks/>
- ***College, University, and High School Yearbooks***  
(extensive list of yearbooks grouped by state and city)  
<http://www.theancestorhunt.com/yearbooks.html>
- **Cyndi's List – Yearbooks**  
<http://www.cyndislist.com/schools/yearbooks/>
- **Donating Yearbooks to Ancestry**  
<https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/Donating-Yearbooks>
- **e-yearbook.com**  
<http://www.e-yearbook.com>
- **Genealogy 101: School Yearbooks**  
<https://blog.genealogybank.com/genealogy-101-school-yearbooks.html>
- **Google – University Digital Collections**  
<https://www.google.com/search?q=university+digital+collections&oq=university+digital+collections&aqs=chrome..69i57.4951j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>
- **Google Books**  
<https://books.google.com/>
- **Internet Archive – Yearbooks**  
<https://archive.org/search.php?query=subject%3A%22Yearbooks%22>
- **MyHeritage US Yearbooks 1890-1979**  
<https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10568/us-yearbooks-1890-1979>
- ***Using Yearbooks for Genealogical Research***  
[http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy\\_news/2016/10/using-yearbooks-for-genealogical-research-.html](http://news.legacyfamilytree.com/legacy_news/2016/10/using-yearbooks-for-genealogical-research-.html)



**ABUNDANT GENEALOGY**

- **Worldcat.org**  
<http://www.worldcat.org/>