

# 10 Ways to Use School Yearbooks for Genealogy

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High school and university yearbooks grew in popularity in the United States starting with the use of the linotype printing process 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.



- Search Strategy:** Besides online databases at genealogy websites, use Google, Google Books, and Internet Archive to find yearbooks both in print and online. It helps if you know the name of the yearbook – very often they had names like “The Spectator” or “The Edge” plus the name of the school.
- Home Address:** In the Senior section, many small town high schools listed the home address of each student.
- 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 more!
- What’s the time frame?** The production copy had to be submitted early, often by March of the school year. This ensured the yearbook was available at the end of the school year in June. So, you may be missing events that occurred in April, May or June of that year.
- What about Copyright?** Most yearbooks are NOT covered by US Copyright laws. Yearbooks published before 1963 and without a copyright notice (©) are not covered by restrictions.
- 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.
- Great Photos:** Among the best features of a yearbook are both the formal senior photos as well as the many funny candid photos of your ancestors or relatives!
- 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, branch and area of service.
- Order the Print Copy.** If you cannot find an online copy of a specific yearbook, use WorldCat to research the closest library to you that has a copy. Then request an “inter-library loan” to receive the book at your local public library.
- 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.

Check out the **School Yearbooks for Genealogy Resource List** on the back page!

## School Yearbooks for Genealogy Resource List

- **A Genealogy Education is in School Yearbooks**  
<https://www.recordclick.com/a-genealogy-education-school-yearbook-memories/>
- **Ancestry US School Yearbooks**  
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1265/>
- **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>
- **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-10569/us-yearbooks-name-index-1890-1979>
- **The Ancestor Hunt – Yearbooks**  
<https://www.theancestorhunt.com/yearbooks.html>
- **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)
- **Worldcat.org**  
<http://www.worldcat.org/>