



THE  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Through the Year(books) at the Library**

So your best friend's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday is coming up and you're planning a surprise "over-the-hill" party? What's the most embarrassing thing you can do for the event? Display a photocopy of his or her high school yearbook picture, of course!

Among the most popular reference materials in the Main Library's Education & Religion Department is its collection of nearly 1,000 high school and college yearbooks. For some people, leafing through an old yearbook is an opportunity to revisit a time when everyone seemed young and everything seemed possible. It can recall a favorite teacher, a decisive basketball game, the boy who always sat behind you but whose name eludes your memory, or the girl you took to the prom.

The annuals are more than occasions for personal nostalgia, however. Packed as they are with photographs, they are fascinating records of a century of Cincinnati-area history. The oldest high school yearbooks in the collection are those for Walnut Hills High School (1902), Woodward (1904), Rugby School of Covington (1905), Hughes (1907), and College Preparatory School for Girls (1907). Among the oldest college yearbooks are those for Ohio State (1888), Denison (1906), and Miami (1908).

By sampling yearbooks, education historians can see how classrooms (and by inference teaching methods) evolved over the decades, and architectural historians can watch the physical alteration of the schools themselves. Cultural historians can see how the concerns of students changed as various extracurricular clubs come and go through the years. Genealogists discover photos of long-lost relatives. Fashion historians and theatrical costumers find the yearbooks for any given year to be an instant snapshot of clothing (miniskirts, bellbottoms), accessories (cat-eye glasses, peace symbol necklaces), and, yes, hairstyles (cut short or piled high, French-rolled or ratted, afroed or braided).

The record of controversial developments (war protests, student rights) is often filtered through the cautious sensibilities of yearbook advisors or school principals, but evidence can still be found. Flip through the class photos from the 1950s through the 1980s, for example, and watch desegregation unfold before your eyes.

A list of the Library's yearbooks is available in the Education and Religion Department or on line at <http://www.cincinnatiLibrary.org/info/main/er/yearbooks.html>. Unfortunately, some area schools are not represented in the collection, and holdings for other schools are incomplete. The Library depends solely on donations to build the yearbook collection, and is always anxious to receive copies of yearbooks and alumni directories. Books may be dropped off in the donation bins at the Main Library or at any of the branches. For more information, call (513) 369-6940.

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√**Information about events at the Main Library and 41 branch libraries is available on the Internet site: [www.CincinnatiLibrary.org](http://www.CincinnatiLibrary.org).**