

A short guide to school records

- ◇ During the 18th century the main types of schools were **charity schools** for the poor, **Sunday schools**, **endowed grammar schools** and **private schools**.
- ◇ In the 19th century, Public elementary schools expanded in numbers due to the work of the **British and Foreign Schools Society** (non-denominational) and the **National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church** (Church of England).
- ◇ These voluntary schools were initially self-financing so education provision remained patchy nation-wide. After 1833, government funds were available for building. With later legislation requiring schools to be built and increasing the leaving age, the number of schools expanded.
- ◇ Schools were affected by the following legislation:
 - * 1870 Forster's Education Act divided England into districts each administered by an elected **school board**, which was responsible for providing non-denominational elementary schools to fill gaps locally.
 - * 1880 Education Act made school attendance to the age of ten **compulsory**. 1893 and 1899 legislation raised the school leaving age to eleven and then twelve.
 - * 1902 Balfour's Education Act abolished school boards. The provision of education then became the responsibility of **county and borough councils**.
 - * 1918 legislation raised the school leaving age to 14.
- ◇ In the 1920s and 1930s emphasis was increasingly placed on the provision of secondary education, with children to be transferred from primary schools after an 11+ exam.
- ◇ In the 1940s and 1950s secondary education was reorganised into grammar, technical, modern or comprehensive schools. The school leaving age was raised to 15 in 1947.
- ◇ 1960s saw comprehensive schools become official government policy. School leaving age was raised to 16 in 1966.
- ◆ There are **two main types of records** - the school's own records and those created by external bodies.

- ◆ Most school records are listed in the Education binders (ED). It is also worth checking the parish lists (in blue folders) if the school was a Church of England school. Records include managers' minutes, logbooks, admission registers, punishment books, H.M.I. Reports, inventories, photographs.
- ◆ The records of external bodies can include building grant plans, school board minutes/accounts (c. 1870-1902), 1902 Education Act returns, Shropshire County Council Education Committee minutes and reports. There are a set of Education reports (Shropshire County Council) 1904-1973 in our local studies library (C46.8). Note that education records in District Authority collections are held offsite.
- ◆ It's also worth checking our library stock for school magazines, histories etc.
- ◆ Useful types of records:
 - * *Managers' minutes* - record details of discussions during managers' meetings e.g. financial matters, staff appointments, building maintenance.
 - * *Log books* - act like a school diary by recording daily events. Detail varies considerably, can include poor attendance/discipline problems, employment of staff, lessons and equipment, medical epidemics, weather, school/local and national events. Dates vary, many commence after the 1862 Revised Code which required schools in receipt of government grant to keep a record of its daily activities.
 - * *Admission registers* - relate to pupils' entry into school and can include date of birth, names of parents/address, the date when pupils left school and reason for leaving. Unfortunately, most admission registers have not survived.
 - * *School building plans* - often include a plan of the site as well as plans of the internal arrangements of rooms. Many created after 1833 when plans could be submitted to secure a government building grant.
 - * *1902 Education Act Returns* - returns made under the Act, they include managers' names, details of buildings and staff, pupil numbers, subjects taught, and some financial accounts.
 - * List of Elementary schools, 1846-1924 (microfilms 124-125) – copies
- ◆ You can search many log books and admission registers, 1870-1914 at www.FindMyPast
- ◆ A few school records are also on microfiche. Most other school records and more recent registers and log books held at Shropshire Archives are originals. This means that you need one of our **Readers' Tickets** to see them.
- ◇ Some school records, including admissions registers and log books, are subject to **data protection** because of the confidential information they can contain and so **access may be restricted**. Please ask staff for further advice.

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