

Institute of Education Archives Subject Guide No 8 Family History



Introduction

The history of the provision of education and teacher training is a complex subject and discovering more about your ancestor's schooling or their career as a teacher can prove difficult. However the records of educational organisations, such as schools, professional bodies and unions, can contain valuable information for family historians, particularly from the mid-

nineteenth century onwards. This guide provides a general overview of the types of records available - both here at the Institute of Education Archives and in other archive services - to help you get started with your search. Suggested further reading can be found at the end of the guide.

Useful records for family historians and where to find them

School Records

Although records of some schools do predate the mid-nineteenth century the majority of schools improved their recordkeeping after the government introduced payment by results in 1862. The most valuable of sources for family historians introduced after this date are the **Admission Registers**, which will typically include the student's name, date of admission, date of birth, address, name of parent/guardian, name of previous school and the date and reason for leaving. Also useful are **Head Teachers' (or School) Log Books** which recorded the events of school life and can contain basic information about staff and students. **School newsletters** and **magazines** often include lists of examination results including the names of students.

The survival rate of school records is patchy and certain types of records will be subject to long closure periods due to the personal information they contain. The Institute of Education Archives do not collect the papers of individual schools and we therefore do not generally have these types of records. School records have normally been retained by the school or placed with the local authority archive service, so when looking for a particular school the first place to contact should be the local Record Office. You can search the [National Archives](#)' website for the contact details of local Record Offices.

If you do not know which school your ancestor attended or taught at but do know their address **local directories** (which can be found in the local Library or Record Office) can be a useful tool to narrow your search. However it is important to remember that the nearest school may not necessarily be the one they attended as certain factors (particularly sex and religion) influence entry into schools.

Teacher Training Records

Prior to the 1902 Education Act the training of teachers was normally carried out under a teacher-pupil system, first introduced in 1846. Pupils from elementary schools were selected and initially trained within schools under the supervision of the Headmaster. Local Record Offices will be able

to provide further advice on schools and the survival of their records. In 1870 pupil-teacher training centres were established and from the 1890s 'day training colleges' increasingly became attached to universities. Unfortunately records from some colleges have not survived; others are retained by the Colleges or have been deposited in larger archive services. If you know the name of the college your ancestor attended you should contact the local Record Office or University to which the College was attached and they will be able to provide you with further information. If the college was in London you can also check the [AIM25](#) website for further details.

The [British and Foreign School Society](#) was founded in 1808 as the Society for Promoting the Lancastrian System for the Education of the Poor to support free schools and teacher training. The archive, located at Brunel University, is fully catalogued and records date from the Society's establishment. The collection includes the papers of the teacher training colleges associated with the BFSS, including Borough Road College, founded in 1798 and Stockwell College. The records date from the mid-nineteenth century and include papers on the running of the colleges and student matters.

The [Church of England Record Centre](#) has the records of the National Society for Promoting Religious Education which was established in 1811 to provide education to pupils, in addition to training teachers for working in their schools. The collection includes papers relating to the work of the central Society and the majority of their schools, including indexes of school teachers (1812-1855).

Between 1914 and 1947 there was a system in place to register all teachers working in England and Wales through the Teachers Registration Council. The scheme was voluntary so registers are incomplete; however some teachers who were already practicing in 1914 chose to register so the records include details of teachers who qualified as early as 1870. The registers contain nearly 100 000 names and entries provide the date of registration, professional address, teacher training qualifications and experience. They are searchable, on a subscription basis, through [British Origins](#).

Collections at the Institute of Education Archives

[British Families Education Service/Service Children's Education Service \(DC/BFE\)](#)

In 1946 the Foreign Office established the BFES to provide schooling for British children in the British-controlled zone of Germany after the Second World War. In 1967 the BFES Association was established so teachers were able to keep in touch. It later merged with the Service Children's Education Service Association. The collection contains membership records; photographs of annual reunions; newsletters; magazines and information on teaching staff.

[College of Preceptors, later College of Teachers \(DC/COP\)](#)

Established in 1846 as the Society of Teachers the organisation pioneered the system of the examination and qualification of teachers in secondary education (mainly in private schools) and many teachers have acquired the qualifications of the College: ACP (Associate); LCP (Licentiate); and FCP (Fellow). It was also one of the first bodies to examine secondary school pupils on a wide variety of subjects, from the 1850s onwards. The collection includes membership records; subscription registers; diploma examination registers (1881-1962); photographs; pupil register (1866-1875); and Calendars (1880-1925) and the journal 'Educational Times' (1847-1923) containing lists of Councillors and Officers, pupil prize winners and individuals' examination results.

Girls' Day School Trust (DC/GDS)

The Girls' Day School Trust was created in 1872 to advance the education of women, opening independent academic high schools for girls throughout England and Wales. The collection contains a wealth of information for those interested in family history including biographical information on Head Teachers and members of the Council and Committees; central staff registers (1875-1971); Shareholder records (1877-1966); and papers regarding the Trust's closed schools including staff, pupil and admission registers, school magazines and Headmistresses' reports (1873-1997). The records of current GDST schools are maintained by the individual schools.

Institute of Education (IE)

The Institute of Education was founded in 1902 as the London Day Training College to train teachers for London's elementary schools. In 1932 when it transferred wholly to the University of London it was renamed the Institute of Education. Between 1949 and c1980 the Institute was the home of the London Area Training Organisation (ATO), overseeing the teacher training in some thirty affiliated colleges. The collection includes pass lists; reports on students; staff registers; staff files; student files; details of awards to ex-Servicemen returning from the First World War; and records of the Islington Day Training College. **Please note:** that many of our staff and student records are incomplete. Neither do we have the records of the constituent colleges associated with the Institute during its role as the London ATO, although we are able to advise on whether these records survive and where they are now kept.

Jack Kitching HMI Archive (DC/KIT)

This collection comprises the papers of the Board of Education Inspectors' Association which was founded in 1919 as a direct consequence of the application of Whitleyism to the Civil Service. Its main concerns were salaries, pensions and conditions of service, although it also dealt with the function and activities of HMIs (Her Majesty's Inspectors). In 1945 it changed its name to the Association of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and in 1973 it amalgamated with the Association of First Division Civil Servants. It wound up its activities in 1992 on the creation of the Office for Standards in Education. The collection contains lists of staff and collected personal papers of HMI's. This collection is not catalogued and is subject to closures under the Data Protection Act (1998). Please contact the Archives Department for further information.

National Union of Women's Teachers (DC/UWT)

Founded in 1904 the NUWT was a feminist organisation working to gain equal pay for women. However it was also interested in other issues that affected women teachers and wider education issues. It was disbanded in 1961 when equal pay was achieved. The collection includes minutes of meetings; correspondence with members; records of some branches; photographs; issues of the Union's magazine 'The Woman Teacher' and press cuttings which include biographical information on members and activists.

World Education Fellowship (DC/WEF)

The WEF was founded in 1921 as the New Education Fellowship by a small group of progressive educationists and liberal thinkers focusing on a number of issues including child-centred education, social reform through education and world citizenship. It quickly expanded to an international organisation and was renamed to reflect this in 1966. The collection includes the original list of officers (c1936-1938); international visitors' book (1937-1960); correspondence with members; lists of members in other countries; and lists of participants at WEF conferences.

Collections at the Institute of Education Library

The Library at the Institute also holds collections that will be of interest to family historians, including a collection on school histories, registers of pupils at private schools and papers of HMI Inspectors. For further information see the [library catalogue](#).

The Library also has annual reports for British and Foreign Schools Society (1863-1964), the earlier volumes of which include lists of staff and students; and intermittent reports for the National Society for Promoting Religious Education (c1812-1938). For further information please contact the Library at lib.enquiries@ioe.ac.uk.

Further Reading

- The National Archives Research Guides on education accessible at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk provide an overview of the history of education and central government records on education
- Guides to educational and school records held by the London Metropolitan Archives are available from [LMA's website](#)
- Society of Genealogists, *School, university and college registers and histories in the library of the Society of Genealogists* (2nd edn 1996)
- Wiltshire Family History Society, *Using Education Records for Family Historians*, available from www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk

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