

Have You Considered School Records?

by Ron Darrah

If there is one experience that nearly all Americans have shared in their lives, it is attending school. From the earliest days of the colonies and later of the republic, the people have emphasized schools and education. A large portion of our national wealth and national attention has always been focused on our schools. In the state of Indiana a similar focus on education has created a wealth of school records for the benefit of Hoosier researchers, some of which are listed below.

As record groups are developed and used by genealogists, they become standard research tools and familiar to most genealogists. Other record groups exist, however, that could be of great use to family researchers, but for one reason or other, they tend to be little known and underutilized. School records are one such group.

School records have some unique features that many other record groups do not share. First, they extend over a period of time. Each student will generate annual records throughout his or her school career. Birth and death records are once in a lifetime, marriage records a very few times, land records also very few; but school records can be generated daily, monthly, and yearly and extend over a decade or more.

Second, school records benefit from the emotional attachment students, teachers, and parents have for the school and school experience. Personal school items are often held and preserved for a lifetime by the students and frequently held longer by their children. Add to this reunions and other alumni activities, and you have a major force for the preservation of school records.

Finally, school records come in many different forms and formats. Some are personal records and some are institutional records, and both types will be found in a wide variety of places. Some will be in family hands, some in local libraries and/or historical societies, some in school or school district offices, some in manuscript collections, and some in state libraries and/or state archives. An increasing number are being

published by state and local genealogical and historical societies and many are appearing on websites.

Look for some of the following items:

1. Report Cards--*Have you searched Grandma's trunk?*
2. Class Pictures--*Lots of these are in local archives or on the school walls.*
3. Teacher License--*Most of the teachers were local residents, too.*
4. School Programs--*These are loaded with names and talents of ancestors.*
5. Library Clippings Files--*Librarians are pack rats; find their stash!*
6. School Newspapers--*Many of these are bound and in the school office.*
7. Reunion Notices--*Check newspapers at the 5 and 10 year intervals.*
8. Yearbooks--*If you want to see Grandpa as a teenager...*
9. Tuition Lists--*Early schools were financed by parents; many still are.*
10. Student Record Cards--*Many of these have been micro-filmed.*
11. Annual School Enumerations--*Some counties have these back to the Civil War!*
12. School Petitions--*Residents often wanted a more local school and they asked for it.*
13. District Staff Directories--*Employees are locals, too; many of these are in the office.*
14. Class Grading and Attendance Lists--*Check the Student Records Office.*

See opposite page for examples of some of the various types of school records that you can find.

CREDIT TICKET

Showing the Character of
 the Mag. Mentations and Department of

Name *Henry English*
 For Seven Months ending *March 29th 1867*

Note: The number 10 shows a perfect recitation; 9 good; 8 fair; 7 poor; 6 very bad; and 0 a complete failure.

STUDIES.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March.	TOTAL.
SPELLING.....	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	9
READING.....	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
WRITING.....	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
ARITHMETIC.....	10	10	10	9	9	10	10	9
GEOGRAPHY.....	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
HISTORY.....	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

An 1867 Marion County report card

Scholars Accounts in the Indianapolis Common Schools

Scholars names	Credits in 1826				
	Debits in March	Credits in April	Debits in Sept.	Credits in Oct.	
1 Juliet Brown	\$1.0704	60.05			\$1.61.02.
14 Charlotte Gibson	97.01	60.05			1.50.05
2 Eliza Brown	72.00	57.09	60.01	5.02	2.42.03 .57
11 Henry McVee	67.02	42.01	56.01	47.05	2.54.09 1.05

An Indianapolis tuition list from 1826

**Fourth Annual
 Hamilton County Declamation
 AND
 Musical Contest
 Wild's Opera House
 April 29, 1911 7:30 P. M.**

- Voice Solo Miss Marie Packett
- "The National Flag," by Henry Ward Beecher
 Miss Ethel Johnson
 Westfield High School.
- "Rich Without Money" Miss Aletha Teter
 Dealey High School.
- "The New South," by Henry W. Grady.....
 Albert Tucker
 Noblesville High School.
- "What Think Ye of Christ," by D. J. Woody
 Miss Helen Miller
 Carroll High School.
- Violin Solo Sidney Hawkins
- "The Return of Herpes," Miss Ruby Loney
 Atlanta High School.
- "The Young Man and the Nation".....
 Walter McConnell
 Cicero High School.

A 1911 Hamilton County
 school program

Examples of School Records