

CPS Alumni: School's In on the Web!

IF YOU OR AN ancestor ever attended a Chicago Public School, check out this website, <http://www.cpsalumni.org>. There is a page for every Chicago Public School (CPS) that ever existed! My husband went to Wolfgang A. Mozart Elementary School for a year and there is a home page for that school too.

First, let's talk about genealogy; for us family historians, the best parts of this website are the historic records available! You do need to register to access the historic records. Though the registration will ask you about what school you attended, you can just pick one at random for the registration to be processed. Your information will *not* show up anywhere for doing this; so, no worries that all of a sudden you will be considered an alumnus of that school or receive e-mails regarding that school or CPS!

Once you register, go to any school's home page and in the lower right corner will be a graphic labeled Historical Attendee Records.

When you click on this graphic, you will be taken to a page of records that are presented in PDF form, beginning with the year 1873 and ending in 1973. There are no known records predating 1873 due to the Chicago fire. Records after 1973 may not legally be displayed. The posted records, however, are a matter of public record and were taken from the Board of Education minutes.

Choose which decade interests you. If it's the 1870s, you will find various records listing high school admissions. Starting in 1896, the lists include both admissions and graduates. And, starting in 1919, elementary school admissions and graduates are included.

A great feature is that the PDF files are searchable. So, if you know an admission/graduation

year or within a few years, you could search the file for each year, whether you know the applicable school or not! Some of the records even include birth dates for the graduates!

Using my husband's family as a starting point, I spent some time looking for his grandmother, great-aunt and grandfather's family.

Interestingly, a 1919 report explicitly states "The following named pupils are entitled to admission to the High School Department September 1, 1919, upon recommendation of the principals of the various elementary schools." We know that at the time, elementary schools went through the eighth grade. This



Page for Wolfgang A. Mozart Elementary School.

His grandmother was Annie Bobejka/Bobeyka (born 1913), her sister was Jennie Bobejka (born 1915) and his grandfather was Tadeus/Theodore Owczarek/Ozark (born 1907). One typically graduated from eighth grade at about 13 or 14 years of age, which would be about 1927 for Annie, about 1929 for Jennie and about 1921 for Theodore.

I found Jennie's entry in the 1929 list for high school admissions:

BRENTANO SCHOOL	
Anderson, Harry W	Refused
Anagnostopulos, Katherine C	1921
Austin, Mary Elaine	1920
Behlke, Lillian C	Refused
Bergquist, Lillian C	1920
Bitrich, Walter N	1920
Blumenthal, Frank J	1920
Bobejka, Jennie A	Refused

seems to indicate that pupils typically were educated through the eighth grade and that pupils did not always then continue on to high school.

Continuing our trek; remember, you have to open each file and then search it individually. In the 1927 list for high school admissions, I found this entry for Annie: DRUMMOND SCHOOL

Blaszczyk, Lucy M	1921
Bobejka, Annie A	1921

Though our target Annie Bobejka was supposedly an Annie Mary Bobejka, would the sisters have attended different elementary schools? That seems unlikely.

When the report includes a date that does not appear to be a birth date, it is referring to the date of vaccination, which is not very helpful for our purposes.

As mentioned earlier, a Jennie A. Bobejka "refused" in 1929. This could explain why in the 1930 census, both Jennie and her sister Annie were working as a laborer and an inspector, respectively, in a candy factory — they or their parents having opted for them not to attend high school.

We do know that Annie attended Tuley High School, though she ultimately graduated from Shurz High School by taking night classes. This record, however, has yet to be found.

Given these apparent stumbling blocks, let's switch to my husband's paternal side and the name Ozark — which

was originally Owczarek — but it's more likely that a school record would bear the birth name, so both will be researched.

Unfortunately, there are records missing for a few years, such as 1921 and 1922 (which would be approximately when Theodore started high school), and there are often records missing for a particular year (summer graduates) that may survive for another year.

No Ozark individuals were found in the earlier years searched, though I would find Owczarek and variants here and there, though none of them were my husband's grandfather or his siblings.

I then shifted to the next generation, where I at least knew personally that they had attended school and graduated, and found an entry for Theodore Ozark, my husband's uncle. It identifies his school and birth date and tells us that he graduated from Wolfgang A. Mozart School in January 1961. (The document states "Graduates of the Elementary Schools, January 27, 1961, The following pupils received diplomas of graduation from the eighth grade of the Chicago public elementary schools and are entitled to admis-

sion to the high school.")

Interestingly, this is consistent with the elementary school that

my husband attended for a brief time and it makes sense since he was living with his grandmother, mother of the above-mentioned

Theodore! And, though I know when Andrea Ozark, sister of Theodore grad-

not attending nor graduating.

And, with any search engine connected to scanned documents, the

OFFICIAL REPORT.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Education held June 24, 1873, the standard for admission to the High and Normal Schools, upon the examination held June 19, 1873, was fixed at seventy per cent..

The following are the names of the successful candidates with their averages :

HIGH SCHOOL,		
Name.	School.	Av.
Mary Brookins.....	Dore.....	91
Clarence H. Blackall,.....	Skinner.....	90
Madora-L. Shepard.....	Brown.....	90
Amelia M. Fisk.....	Skinner.....	90
.....	Hayes.....	90
.....	Hayes.....	89

Above: The results of the 1873 High and Normal Schools admission exam.

Left: The admissions list for 1960-61 shows Theodore Ozark and even includes his birthdate!

WOLFGANG A. MOZART SCHOOL

Anderson, Barbara	12-10-1946
Baratta, Joseph	2-27-1947
Bare, Kelly	3-15-1947
Boehlje, James	5- 2-1946
Carellas, John	11-14-1946
Carellas, Peter	11-14-1946
Durnil, Kenneth	1-13-1947
Giese, Frederick Harry	1-31-1947
Goy, Patrick Michael	3-17-1947
Grabowski, Diane Joan	2- 2-1946
Hamera, Patricia Ann	11-23-1946
Heckel, Jayne Viann	5-26-1947
Hildebrandt, Betty	12- 7-1946
Jackson, Donalee	7- 5-1946
Kalinowski, Keith	10-31-1947
Kania, Charles Walter	1-31-1947
Katona, Patricia Jean	6-18-1946
Kirschke, Richard	4-24-1946
Malo, Teddy	3- 1-1945
Meyer, Robert Edward	8-10-1947
Miskiewicz, Mary Ann	1- 2-1947
Moloczniak, Mary Margaret	1- 2-1947
Ozark, Theodore	6-16-1946
Podgorski, Ronald	11- 4-1946

uated from the same school, 1958, she is not listed in either of the two lists that include this year. She went on to graduate from Kelyvn Park High School in 1962 and again, is not listed.

So, do remember that the information provided is not exactly the same year to year, nor do all the records survive and, as with many documents, the original lists were not necessarily complete and accurate. This means that the absence of a record tells you nothing except that the information is not found versus the individual

quality of the original document can definitely impact the ability for you to successfully "search" for a name.

If you are an alumnus of CPS, there are other features that you might want to take advantage of, such as sharing a memory, naming a favorite teacher or answering questions posed by current students. You can also submit news and nominate distinguished alumni, or recognize someone for achievement as a CPS leader.

If you want to learn more about an ancestor as a youth, what better way than to learn what schools they went to, when they started and when they graduated!

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Diane L. Richard has been doing genealogy research for more than 20 years. With a husband born in Chicago and several clients with Chicago connections, she has spent many hours researching the records of Chicago and Cook County. She currently does professional research in NC and she can be found online at www.mosaicrpm.com/Genealogy.