



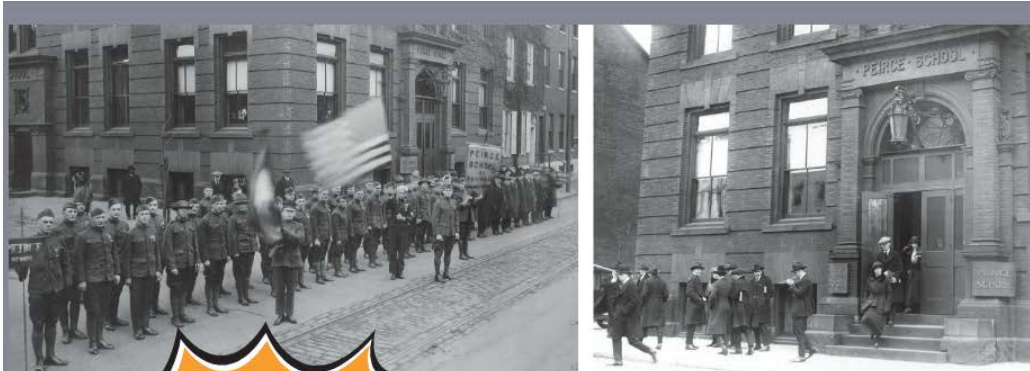
**Press Clippings  
July 2015  
Web**

Title: Archives Re-Energized

Author: Bart Everts

Link: <http://www.bluetoad.com/publication/?i=266993&p=10> (Archival Outlook)

Date: July 2015



**Above Photo:** Peirce students exiting College Hall, 1920s. *Courtesy of Peirce College Archives.*

**Photo to Left:** Peirce student soldiers gather on Pine Street during the First World War, 1917. *Courtesy of Peirce College Archives.*

# Archives, REENERGI<sup>ZED</sup>

## Using a Milestone Anniversary to Reinvigorate Interest in Your Collections

Bart Everts, Peirce College

How do you generate interest in the archives on a campus of working adults at an institution known for looking forward? This question lingered among the curators of Peirce College's archival collections, and the answer was found in marking a major milestone at the institution, the sesquicentennial anniversary.

Peirce College in Philadelphia is celebrating its 150th year throughout 2015, and this has provided an opportunity to dig through the archives to better tell the history of the school to the community. Founded as the Union Business College by Dr. Thomas May Peirce and a group of educators in September 1865, the original purpose of the school was to provide business training to returning soldiers and supply the rapidly growing industrial sector of Philadelphia with clerks, office workers, and managers.<sup>1</sup> An educator, master penman, and prominent Philadelphian, Peirce collected and preserved several items related to the early years of the school to establish an archives.

### Sharing Our Story

The anniversary was a chance for Peirce librarians to "rediscover" the archival collections and collaborate with our

communications department and the anniversary task force to promote the history of the college. The staff was able to expose the archives to a wide audience, with historical photographs appearing on various promotional and event items, internal exhibits promoted through social media, and a monthly space on the campus blog that highlighted various items and their relationship to the history of the institution.

Items from the first fifty years of Peirce history were displayed in the library. This first half-century saw the college grow in size and scope, and exhibit items include catalogs; letters from presidential commencement speakers, including Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt; and photographs of Peirce family members who ran the school in those years. Subsequent planned exhibits will document the second and current half-century histories of the school.

The previous year, the librarians began a dialog with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), creating an opportunity to display select items from the collections beyond the Peirce community in a physical setting viewable to scholars, genealogists, and the general public. Peirce first loaned

items to HSP for their January 2015 exhibit *Pen to Paper* on nineteenth-century penmanship. Following the success of this collaboration, the college loaned additional items related to the sesquicentennial celebration for the 2015 exhibit *1865: Eyewitness to History*. Fitting to a school founded as the Union Business College, a sketch of the original campus and a copy of the 1865 catalog were included in a section of the exhibit related to programs for returning Union soldiers.<sup>2</sup> A discussion and photographs of the exhibit were shared with the Peirce community on the Peirce Connections blog.<sup>3</sup>

### Preserving Our Present

Sharing preserved items wasn't the only way the archives was engaged in the anniversary. During the annual alumni reception, former students recorded their memories and experiences at the school. Representatives from classes that graduated in the 1950s through recent alumni participated in this voluntary activity, and their stories will be preserved, ensuring future anniversary celebrations will have physical representations of this

**Continued on page 28 >>**

July/August 2015

## Archives, Reenergized continued from page 8

celebration. Just as archived items from the 125th anniversary helped inform the 150th anniversary committee, the minutes, programs, and promotional items from the sesquicentennial will be preserved to guide future anniversaries. We largely used items drawn from our physical collections for this anniversary. Having tangible items to display, loan, and discuss added to the understanding of the past and how the college evolved into its present-day manifestation.

### Showing the Value of Archives

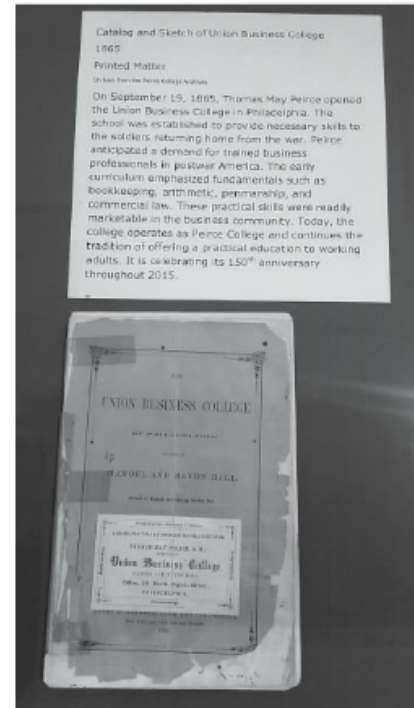
An anniversary provides an excellent opportunity to engage an institutional community in a discussion about the importance of archives, particularly at institutions with little budgetary allotment to archival preservation. Archivists know

the importance of preserving physical items to engage in a historical dialog about the institution, and telling the story of Peirce's 150 years would be difficult without an archival record to discuss, debate, and display. ■

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Bjelopera, Jerome P. *City of Clerks: Office and Sales Workers in Philadelphia, 1870–1920*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana, IL, 2005.
- <sup>2</sup> "1865: Eyewitness to History," Historical Society of Pennsylvania, accessed June 3, 2015. [hsp.org/history-online/exhibits/1865-eyewitness-to-history](http://history-online/exhibits/1865-eyewitness-to-history).
- <sup>3</sup> Everts, Bart. "Peirce College as an Eyewitness to History," Peirce Connections, accessed June 3, 2015. <http://blog.peirce.edu/2015/04/peirce-college-as-eyewitness-to-history.htm>.

1865 Union Business College catalog on display at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's 1865: *Eyewitness to History* exhibit, March 2015. Courtesy of Peirce College Archives.



Title: 5 ways Philadelphia is getting smarter about higher education

Author: Dan Norton

Link: [http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/print-edition/2015/07/31/5-ways-philadelphia-is-getting-smarter-about.html?ana=e\\_ph\\_prem](http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/print-edition/2015/07/31/5-ways-philadelphia-is-getting-smarter-about.html?ana=e_ph_prem)

Date: July 31, 2015

the regional economy.

**For adult learners: Online, in the classroom, maybe a mix, it's the student's choice**

Peirce College's curriculum is geared toward adult learners who can't always make it to class.

To accommodate its students' other commitments, Peirce now allows them to select whether they'll attend class in-person or online on a week-by-week basis. There is no minimum for how much a student must attend a class on each platform, so theoretically a student may pass without ever meeting his or her professor.

"This puts that flexibility in each course and allows students to plan ahead and respond to those life events that happen to them spontaneously," said Rita Toliver-Roberts, Peirce's vice president of academic development.

Right now, the option is only available for some IT, health and graduate courses. But Toliver-Roberts said Peirce plans to make the option available for all of its classes by September 2016. This fall, it will officially roll out with four degree programs.

Attendance rates – this counts online and in-person – have gone up since the implementation of the program, and Toliver-Roberts said student satisfaction is high.

"They like the opportunity to choose," she said. "They can jump into virtual rooms or chat sessions, interacting with our faculty members in different ways."

Grades have gone up, too.

"Based on the market's needs, it is clearly time to take this flexibility to the next level," she said.