

To:

President of the Charles S. Peirce Society, Risto Hilpinen

Extended version 1/2013

Memorandum

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This memo contains a brief account and a description of some findings following my recent visit to Harvard Libraries on material related to Charles Peirce.

I visited Harvard College's Houghton Library from 11 February to 11 March 2012 as part of my Houghton Library's Joan Nordell Fellowship for 2011-2012. During these four weeks I inspected relatively large parts of Houghton's Peirce collection as well as identified Peirce-related material held at other collections of the Harvard College Library system.

My principal goal for the visit was to study the Peirce papers that would advance the three ongoing projects of mine:

(1) Checking the original pages of those Peirce's writings that I have identified for inclusion in the volume to collect key writings on the logic of Existential Graphs.

(2) Going through the Peirce Correspondence (L 1 – L 484), with a focus on (a) the letters that were not microfilmed (overall about one-third) and (b) those exchanges that we have planned to include into the first two volumes of the Selected Correspondence of Charles Peirce, edited at the University of Helsinki by the Helsinki Peirce Research Centre.²

As a result, I was able to acquire a good number of digital images about his logic manuscript, letters and loose pages containing Existential Graphs, which he often scribed using blue, red and occasionally brown and green ink rendered invisible in microfilm or photocopies. The digital photos, mostly from the Houghton main Peirce collection but also from Houghton's other collections and Harvard archives, amounts to nearly 3.000 frames. I would be happy to share them with other scholars although they are too large to be conveniently emailed.

I also drafted an inventory of Peirce-related material consisting mostly of his books and other important papers deposited in off-Houghton collections (66 items in total), and I believe many of these is of interest to the scholarly community.

¹ This date when this report was written is also Lady Victoria Welby's Centennial.

² These are (1) the Peirce-William James correspondence that derives largely from the William James papers at Houghton in two collections, and (2) the correspondence between Peirce and his Johns Hopkins students, including, as the major component, the Christine Ladd-Franklin Letters (L 237 and Columbia's Butler Library) as well as correspondence with Ellery W. Davis, John Dewey, Benjamin Ives Gilman, Joseph Jastrow, Alan Marquand, Josiah Royce and Henry Taber. Some of B. I. Gilman's letters are at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts but they pertain to his later life and none of them with the persons mentioned here. Some of the Royce-Peirce letters are at the Harvard University Archives.

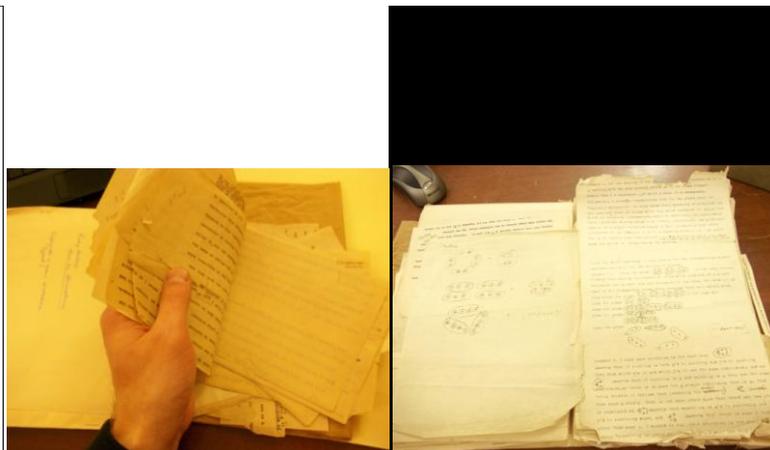
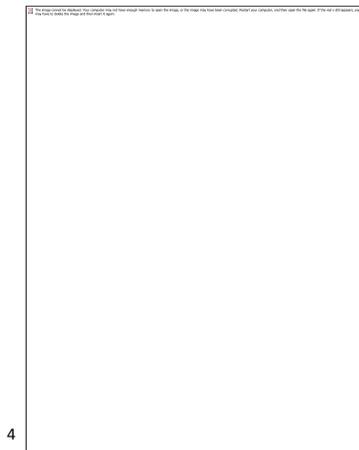
The State of the Peirce Papers at Houghton

Anyone who has spent some time with Houghton's Peirce collection becomes soon aware of the fact that the collection needs significant additional processing. In comparison to the William James collections, for instance, Peirce's papers are typically not neatly organised in adequate folders and boxes. The collection's current status does not accord with the standards of contemporary archiving.³

The following seem to be the main defects of the Peirce collection as of 2012:

1. Manuscript folders tend to contain several bundles of pages, attached together with rusty paperclips and pins, often without protective slips. Many of the clips appear not having been replaced at all since the papers were microfilmed in the 1960s or even earlier. They should be all removed. Damage to the pages that clips and pins have caused is visible in what probably amounts to hundreds of folders.
2. Many folders are crammed with large numbers of sheets. The *Carnegie Institution Correspondence* (L 75), for instance, runs several hundred pages of material in considerably varying types and sizes of sheets yet is deposited in two standard-size folders making them nearly impossible to safely pull from the boxes. The same happens with Carus (L 77), Coast Survey (L 91), Correspondence Course (L 100), W.P. Garrison/The Nation (L 159) or Russell (L 387) correspondences, among others. The Coast Survey files fill up an entire filing case but are hopelessly contained inside two folders. At least three letters described in the Robin Catalogue are missing from the Coast Survey folders and the reason may be the difficulty of keeping track of the material unless more folders and cases are used to organize them.
3. Some filing cases and folders are too small for the papers they contain. Particularly poignant is the fate of the *Welby Correspondence* (L 463), which also runs several hundred pages in length, crammed in two folders. The second folder contains several oversized sheets, which due to the small size of the filing case in which these folders are kept have been damaged nearly beyond recovery.⁴ What makes this a particular loss is the fact that the second set of papers, which seems to have been added to the Houghton Peirce papers from the Cust collection, and despite the sticker on top of the folder (see the first image in fn 3), was not microfilmed. It contains original sheets by Welby's hand and numerous typescript pages about Existential Graphs. The material is unique since (i) these pages are the transcripts of the original letters which have not been fully preserved and (ii) they are the only testimony that someone else besides Peirce (together with Welby's secretary C. K. Ogden) was actually studying the graphs.

³ The Houghton Library staff is certainly aware of this fact and they know that if they were to ask an archivist to make an assessment of the status of the collection, the report would not be positive.



4. Some incidental damage and mishandling is not infrequent; in C. J. Keyser Letters (L 233), for instance, I found some sticky mould that has been formed between several pages, gluing the sheets together damaging both the paper and the text. The text in the *Letter Copybook* (L 248) from 1872-1873 is no longer readable. The pages of A. B. Kempe's "Note to a Memoir on the Theory of Mathematical Form" in L 232a are shattered in pieces. The filing cases are old and some of them shaky with loose covers and broken corners and sides.
5. The Peirce letters that were removed from the main collection and placed with the William James collection are not in acid-free folders at all but simply squeezed inside two old envelopes.
6. The Robin catalogue descriptions and sometimes also the numberings do not fully match the contents of the folders. This causes delays in identifying and paging the material (see Appendix for the document listing the discrepancies I encountered). The inconsistencies were probably caused by a multitude of factors over the years, but it is nevertheless clear that a processing of the collection aiming at its preservation must be top priority and is largely about re-folding, but it could also be accompanied by some scholarly effort to update the Robin catalogue and/or at least slightly to rearrange the material.

This said, the claim sometimes made to the effect that the entire Peirce collection is rapidly deteriorating does not seem to be true. Most of the manuscripts are in a fairly good condition, and I encountered, among the several thousand pages that I had time to inspect, relatively few cases where the ink had really faded beyond legibility or where the sheets themselves would have been severely corroded. This might also be due to the fact that I focussed on his late, post-1903 writings and an opposite conclusion might well be arrived at after having gone through the bulk of the early papers (cf. the situation with L 248, for instance).

Currently the Houghton staff pages you several boxes at once, which makes the inspection of the papers much easier than it used to be. The formal policy is that you can photograph up to 20% of the items but for the loose and unorganized material as the Peirce papers it appears to be unclear what this amounts to. In general there probably is little problem with photographing entire Robin numbers and folders, for instance.

There has been some recent discussion about creating a Digital Peirce Archive from the Houghton Collection, and the Library has to some extent already begun with their independent effort on digitizing parts of the collection. Based on my recent visit and the aforementioned considerations, I would like to point out two relevant issues:

1. The digitalization should proceed in the order and manner which is justified from the scientific and scholarly points of view. Robin Catalogue prescribes the order which aims at following Peirce's classification of the sciences and is in that sense a reasonable guide to follow. So far, the library has digitized the collection more or less haphazardly.
2. Digitalization should not supplant preservation. If digitalization is done without an adequate face-lift for the physical collection, there is a risk that much more is lost in the future. On the other hand, no future work based on the possible digital collection should be hampered by a negligence of processing and ordering the physical collection today.
3. The remaining Peirce's letters and manuscripts from other collections should be transferred to the main collection prior to digitizing.

Off-Houghton Peirce material

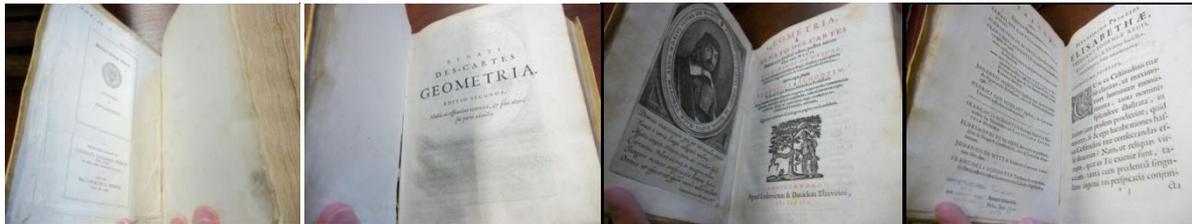
This material was located by going through the HOLLIS catalogue and the associated electronic finding aids, and in some cases with the help of additional library-specific finding aids and staff assistance, which is gratefully acknowledged.

While most Peirce-related material, including many of his books, are indeed to be found at Houghton, there is a significant number of relevant documents and books at other Harvard libraries. Surprisingly, some of Peirce's books have still not found their way to Houghton, such as Descartes's *Geometria* which is in the Robbins Library of the Department of Philosophy kept in a glass case together with Royce's books. Robbins library is open for any patron, sometimes even with no permanent staff overseeing the collection.

Below is a summary of the material I have been able to locate; a complete list and the description of what in total is now 66 items is given in the Appendix.

(A) Peirce's books/offprints at off-Houghton libraries:

1. Lockyer, Norman, Sir, 1836-1920. *Inorganic evolution as studied by spectrum analysis*. By Sir Norman Lockyer. London, Macmillan and co., limited, 1900.
Widener | Chem 1509.00.9.
2. Peirce, James Mills, 1834-1906. *Mathematical tables chiefly to four figures*. First series. Boston, Ginn and Heath, 1880.
Harvard Archives | Harvard Depository | HUG 1680.621 Flyleaf inscribed "C. S. Peirce"; back leaves covered with mss. notes. Poor condition.
3. *Three papers on logic* / by C.S. Peirce.
Andover-Harv. Theol, Harvard Depository Brittle Book 27 Peirce.
4. [Logical papers: separated from the "Journal of Speculative Philosophy" and the "Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences". (1.) Questions concerning certain faculties claimed for man. (2.) Some consequences of four incapacities. (3.) Grounds of validity of the law of Logic: Further consequences of four incapacities. (4) On the logic of mathematics, Part I, and on Logical extension and comprehension. (5) Three papers on logic, read before the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1867.
Widener | Phil 5055.1.
5. *Description of a notation for the logic of relatives, resulting from an amplification of the conceptions of Boole's calculus of logic* / by C. S. Peirce, Cambridge : Welch, Bigelow, 1870.
Widener | Phil 5000.5.
6. *Note on the sensation of color*. Amer. journ. sci. (3). 13. 247-251. 1877.
Museum Comp Zoology | Zool.Misc.39.
7. *Illustrations of the logic of science*. [n.p., 1877].
Widener | Harvard Depository KF 3166.
8. *Photometric researches*. By C.S. Peirce. Made in the years 1872-1875. Leipzig, W. Engelmann, 1878.
Cabot Science | Astr 808.78.5 F. Harvard University Archives | HUF 165.804 vol.9. Widener | Sci 520.20(9). Wolbach Library | Wolbach Library AI 2175.
9. *On small differences of sensation*, read Oct.17, 1884. By C.S.Peirce and J.Jastrow. [Washington, D.C. 188-.]
Widener | Harvard Depository Phil 5635.19 F [Consult Circ. Desk for HNUP13]
10. [Prospectus of an edition of] *The treatise of Petrus Peregrinus on the lodestone*. Latin text, English version, and notes, with an introductory history of experimental science in the middle ages, by C.S. Peirce.
Widener | Phys 5.1.
11. *The century's great men in science*. By Charles S. Peirce.
Widener | LSoc 4681.15 vol.1900.
12. Descartes: *Geometria*. Second Edition. Robbins Library, Glass Case.
Robbins | QA33 .D43 1659. This book is not tagged as Peirce's in HOLLIS, see the pictures below:



Many of 1-12 are circulating. The items 1, 2, 10 and 12 are Peirce's own copies and should be transferred to Houghton, which currently holds 32 books from Peirce's own collection, including some of his own bound volumes.⁵ But other items in the list above are equally valuable and most of them should either be held in closed stacks or moved to Houghton. A number of volumes simply have not been tagged as Peirce as their former owner in the HOLLIS system at all. Nathan Houser has recently located about 125 of Peirce's volumes held in Widener's collection (personal correspondence) with the aid of Google Books.

I photographed most of the substantial annotations by Peirce on books I consulted during the visit, and I am happy to share these images (see Appendix).

(B) Peirce-related archive materials:

1. Harvard University Archives:

- a. *General information by and about the Metaphysical Club*. This folder contains a one-page Peirce MS fragment (late) on the emergence of the 'first' Metaphysical Club, with the description about the invention of its title: "A name chosen to alienate all whom it would alienate".
- b. *Papers of Josiah Royce, 1750, 1812-1999*. The Peirce folder contains seven highly important original letters from CSP, mostly to JR, and mostly still unpublished (CSP to JR, n.d.; CSP to D.C. Heath Nov 5, 1898; CSP to JR Aug 19, 1905 + a 4-page draft of the same letter & same date; CSP to JR Aug 22, 1905; JR to CSP Sept 22, [1905?]; CSP to JR Sept 23, 1905; CSP to JR, June 30, 1913.
- c. *Peabody, Francis Greenwood, 1847-1936*. Peabody's notes on Peirce's lecture on the British Logicians, Dec 14, 1869 to Jan 19, 1870. (c. 120 pages).
- d. *Papers of Edwin Bidwell Wilson, 1914-196? (inclusive)*. E. B. Wilson was appointed "somewhat against [his] will" to be an official biographer of CSP for the National Academy of Science. EBW states having met CSP twice. Contains the beginnings on a memoir but runs only ten pages. Correspondence in 1925 with Johns Hopkins University registrar about the CSP material. Also some transcripts of the CSP-D. C. Gilman letters from JHU.
- e. *Papers of Francis Ellingwood Abbot, 1841-1904*.
Box #46, Peirce, Charles Spence [sic], 1864-1867
- f. *Harvard University. Dept. of Philosophy. Records, 1906-1979 (inclusive)*. The Charles S. Peirce Bequest.
- g. Records of the President of Harvard University, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, 1909-1933.

⁵ See the list of items in the Appendix. According to Houser (1992), Robbins Library held about 35 of Peirce's books in 1987 and at that time there were also about 25 books at Houghton (Nathan Houser, "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Peirce Papers", in *Signs of Humanity*, vol. 3. Eds. Michel Balat and Janice Deledalle-Rhodes, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992, pp. 1259-1268). So the number at Houghton has gone only slightly up but Robbins might have lost much of its Peirce holdings in a quarter of a century. The librarian was no longer able to locate the sixteen volume Galileo, his copy of Bayle's *Dictionary*, the *Opus Majus* of Roger Bacon in two volumes, or Schelling's *Transcendental Idealism* listed by Houser in 1987.

- i. *1925-1928, Box #231*: An application from Mr Schneer, Jan 1926, for permission to study the Peirce MSS at Harvard. Request denied by President Lowell on the grounds that “there is currently another man working on the papers”.⁶
- ii. *1930-1933, Box #299*: The Juliette Peirce– A. L. Lowell–J. H. Woods correspondence on the legal dispute concerning Peirce’s books and manuscripts. Oct 19, 1931–Apr 28, 1933. The last letter from JP to ALL, annotated “not answered”, suggests that JP never signed the release over Charles’s papers nor accepted the offer of \$1.000 from ALL & JHW to do that. Also includes letters to/from Gifford Pinchot, Alice H. James, Henry James, Alfred Marvin (JP’s lawyer) and Barry Benefield (book editor).

2. Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute:

- a. *The Fay Family Papers, 1800-1953 (inclusive), 1859-1953 (bulk)*. Contains Melusina Fey Peirce’s correspondence.
- b. *Papers of Sylvia Wright Mitarachi, 1834-1990 (inclusive)*. The final typescript of *The Life of Melusina Fey Peirce*, as well as a significant number of documents including the MFP-CSP marriage break-up and correspondence with Max Fisch.

3. Harvard Law School Library:

- a. *Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1841-1935. Papers, 1637-1967*. Contains eleven pages on Charles Peirce (photographed). The CSP & OWH letters are transcripts from the main Houghton CSP Collection, but in addition there are exchanges, e.g., between Fisch and Howe.

Peirce Material in other Houghton Collections

Worth mentioning is that many of the Houghton collections besides the main Peirce MS collection possess Peirce material, mostly letters. Among them are the obvious cases of:

1. *William James Papers, 1803-1941 (inclusive) 1862-1910 (bulk)*. 58 letters to CSP.
2. *Letters to William James from various correspondents and photograph album, 1865-1929*. Peirce, Charles Sanders, 1839-1944. 105 letters to same.
3. *Peirce, Benjamin, 1809-1880. Papers, ca. 1835-1880 and Correspondence, ca. 1835-1880*.

But there are also the following archives:

4. *William Roscoe Thayer papers, 1762-1927 (inclusive) 1872-1921 (bulk)*.
(1405) Peirce, Charles Sanders, 1839-1914. 1 letter; 1903.
5. *Charles Eliot Norton papers, ca. 1845-1908*.
(5425) *A.L.s. Cambridge, 11 Dec 1865. 1s. (1p.)
6. *Letters to James Haughton Woods, 1885-1931 and undated*.
(16) Peirce, Juliette. Letter to James Haughton Woods, 1915 March 29. 1 folder. With one sheet of notes by her husband, Charles S. (Charles Sanders) Peirce, with the heading “Notes for 4 papers on Pragmaticism.”⁷

⁶ The identity of “another man” is not revealed. Charles Hartshorne was appointed only in the late 1920s to work with the papers and Morris Cohen had finished his editorial task by 1923.

⁷ JP to JHW, mailed on May 10, 1915: “At last have I succeeded in shipping the five boxes to you. I have not been able to sort the writings, and to be on the safe side I send you so far, all I have found. As you mentioned in one of your letter [sic], a few words might help you to a thorough editing. The papers seemed so mixed. There might be more books and more writings. And after taking a little rest I will resume packing xxxing a thorough search and send you the books that might be useful to the department. Please enclosed find a paper that turned up when boxes had been closed, also the bill of backing. Most cordially yours, Juliette Peirce, March 29th 1915”.

Aside from Peirce, Robbins Library hosts many of Royce's volumes, including his copies of Kant, Hegel and Husserl, with extensive annotations (see Appendix for photographs).

Further remarks

A wealth of material for Peirce scholarship is available at Harvard libraries. It goes without saying that the material in all of these collections is highly important from scientific, scholarly, historical and biographical points of views. In addition to Houghton, Schlesinger Library offers one-month scholarships for the study of its collections. A committed scholar or a PhD student could bring Sylvia Wright Mitarachi's near-ready typescript on Melusina Fay Peirce to completion, for instance. This would be a great service also to the history of feminism and women's rights in the US.⁸ Ideally, Peabody's lecture notes should also be published, and there is a lot more to be done. First and foremost, more pressure should be placed on Houghton Library to see through a complete overhaul of the Peirce collection.

Also, a question of the location of Charles's older brother James Mill Peirce's papers poses itself. However, Harvard library system does not recognize their existence at all despite James Mill was a long time professor and even the dean of faculty there. Only some of James Mill's books are around. José Vericat (personal communication) has located James Mill's Will at the City Hall of Cambridge, Massachusetts in which his "books, pictures, manuscripts, and other papers, furniture..." are given into the charge of Helen Ellis and Herbert Henry Davis Peirce while "the more important scientific books" are to go to his brother Charles. Helen Ellis's and Herbert Peirce's Will's have not been located yet.

Let me in conclusion point out the highly important content of the folder (marked B.1.f.ii above) that I drew up from the Records of the President of Harvard University, Abbott Lawrence Lowell. It concerns the legal dispute over the status of Peirce's books and manuscripts and takes place between Juliette Peirce, A. L. Lowell and James H. Woods. It is not mentioned in the usual literature (Brent 1993, Houser 1992, Ketner 1998 or Walther 1989). It concludes, in April 28, 1933, by Juliette Peirce "absolutely refusing" "to sign the release" – proposed by Lowell and Woods as a result of their collusion – of her late husband's manuscripts to the President and Fellows of Harvard College. One might hold this a prima facie evidence that the claim of the ownership or literary rights of the Peirce papers rests with the Peirce family.⁹

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Appendix:

1. A catalogue of Peirce books and Peirce-related material at Harvard libraries and archives (partial)
2. Notes on the Peirce MSS collection
3. Robin Catalogue – Notes on the Correspondence
4. Annotations in Royce's Books from Robbins Library

⁸ Related to this – but not only – one should not forget the Fabian and Christine Ladd-Franklin Papers at Butler Library's Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at Columbia University.

⁹ José Vericat has informed me about subsequent correspondence that took place between Juliette, her lawyer Edward Nally (who seems to have replaced Harry F.R. Dolan) and Harvard, to arrive at an understanding. To Juliette Nally writes: "Finally, the College has agreed with finality of take it or leave it, that they will pay in consideration for a release to them of all demands, an annuity in the amount of \$300 to you, which annuity is to continue for the rest of your life, the payment of this money to commence immediately upon receipt of necessary papers signed by you" (Nally to Juliette, May 10, 1934), recommending Juliette to accept the offer. Juliette's reaction is similar to Dolan's: "If I accepted \$250.00 a month for my dear husband's life-long works, it would be selling his dear body and would be blasphemous and a sacrilege" (Juliette to Nally, July 10, 1934). Nally answers: "The offer submitted by Harvard was final, and I am unable to procure any better settlement from them" (Nally to Juliette, August 13, 1934).