

McLean County Museum of History

Brown's Business College

Processed by
Harris Dorgan
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1893-2008; mostly 1914-43.
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	Past Perfect #2022.0043 See also <i>Brown's Business College Bookkeeping</i> [IL (MCLEAN) BRO 1890] <i>Brown's Business College: the College Hand Book: Bloomington, Illinois</i> [IL (MCLEAN) BRO 1890]

Brief History

Brown's Business College (1893-1972) offered training for young men and women entering the workforce. This chain of schools, established by G.W. Brown of Jacksonville, offered classes in various downstate Illinois communities, including Galesburg, Moline, Bloomington, and Peoria. For the better part of a half-century, Brown's Business College in downtown Bloomington offered "solid and practical" training for young men and women entering the lower rungs of the white-collar workforce.

The Industrial Age demanded bookkeepers, stenographers, cashiers, and correspondent clerks, the training of which traditional four-year colleges and universities generally ignored. Railway, telegraph, manufacturing, and express companies needed office workers to keep their increasingly paperwork-heavy operations running smoothly and efficiently. In addition, the invention of the typewriter — and later other office machines, such as the stenograph (a shorthand machine) — led to the further specialization of office jobs.

Business colleges throughout the nation filled the education vacuum. "In this age of sharp competition there is little chance for the young person who faces the world without the knowledge and skill that comes from special training," read a Brown's Business College student handbook from 1900.

The school maintained a "campus" in Bloomington from the 1890s to the early 1940s. For a while, classes were held on the third floor of the Henry Keiser Building, 505-507 N. East St. Around 1909, Brown's moved into the second floor of the Hoblit Building, located at the southwest corner of Main and Mulberry streets. (For further information, see Bill Kemp, "Brown's delivered white-collar education in History folder.)

Scope

The collection includes newspaper articles from local newspapers in the early twentieth century, advertisements featuring the college, graduation programs from 1917-19, 1928-29, and 1931, and other miscellaneous items.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: History

- 1.1 "Brown's delivered white-collar education," *Pantagraph*, November 30, 2008: B3.

Folder 2: Newspaper Articles

- 2.1 "Business College Graduation," *Daily Bulletin*, October 23, 1914: 5.1.
- 2.2 "Send Large Class Out Into Business World," *Pantagraph*, February 27, 1919: 7.3-4.

Folder 3: Advertisements

(Note: All from the *Pantagraph* unless noted otherwise)

- 3.1 "Triumvirate of Business," *Daily Leader*, January 16, 1890: 3.7-8.
- 3.2 "Brown's Business Colleges," *Weekly Pantagraph*, January 9, 1891: 3.
- 3.3 "An Old School but New Methods," September 1, 1899: 5.
- 3.4 "What School?" August 25, 1902: 5.
- 3.5 "His Successor," *Bulletin*, Aug 19, 1917.
- 3.6 "...This School..." August 5, 1918: 4.
- 3.7 "Be a Business Farmer," *Daily Bulletin*, November 23, 1918: 2.
- 3.8 "Stenography Pays," February 8, 1919: 4.
- 3.9 "Summer Work for Teachers," *Daily Bulletin*, June 6, 1920: 14.
- 3.10 "Brown's Business College," *Daily Bulletin*, June 13, 1920: 16.
- 3.11 "Get These Facts Clearly In Your Mind," August 27, 1921: 4.
- 3.12 "You Should Attend a Business College ...," September 8, 1923: 4.
- 3.13 "The Why of Brown's Business College," brochure, undated,
- 3.14 "Brown's Courses for Future Executives," January 1, 1927: 9C.
- 3.15 "Brown's Business College," with 1929 fall class photo, etc. Aug 26, 1930 McLean County Centennial special edition.
- 3.16 "Summer School," full-page ad from 1931 Aegis, Bloomington High School yearbook.
- 3.17 "Enter Monday, Sept. 13," September 10, 1937: 11.
- 3.18 "Classes for Married Ladies," April 3, 1942: 3.

Folder 4: Graduation Programs

- 4.1 Class of 1917, January 31, 1918
- 4.2 Class of 1918, February 26, 1919 (2 copies)
- 4.3 Class of 1923, November 22
- 4.4 May 31, 1928
- 4.5 June 4, 1929
- 4.6 "Commencement Memories" booklet, owner not provided but was inserted in Cooksville High School diploma for Thelma Irene Williams, 1929.
- 4.7 "Commencement Memories" booklet owned by Doris Irene Cisco, 1931.
- 4.8 Photograph from 1939 Purple and Gold, Bloomington High School publication, showing BHS graduates at Brown's Business College.
- 4.9 Photograph from 1941 Purple and Gold, Bloomington High School publication, showing BHS graduates at Brown's Business College.

Folder 5: Miscellaneous

- 5.1 "Brown's Business Colleges" from *Illustrated Bloomington of To-Day*, 1903.
- 5.2 Brown's Business College *Student News*, July 1931.
- 5.3 "Parts of Machine," 4 pages of typed notes by Charlotte Pfohman, undated.
- 5.4 City directory listings for Brown's Business College, 1893 to 1943.
- 5.5 Notes for books in McLean County Museum of History Library.
- 5.6 Email from Jack Muirhead to Bill Kemp regarding woman in Brown's Business College student photo presumed to be Alverta Duff, October 6, 2017.

5.7 Gift Agreement from Mike Thomas about a Gregg Speed Studies text book of short hand that belonged to his father.

Loose Item: Gregg Speed Studies Book, a textbook on short hand, 1919. Belonged to Earl Thomas who came to Bloomington from Cropsey, IL. Earl Thomas went on to create a booking firm in the Griesheim building where he worked until his retirement in 1978.