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Do You Doodle?

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Do You Doodle?

Abstract
If you were, are, or will become a student, then you have probably thought about doodling during class. Fear not! We are not the only generation to draw in the midst of a lecture. Today’s research escapade led me to investigate George Currier’s notes from his time as a student at the Medical Department of Pennsylvania College. [excerpt]

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Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Exhibits Intern, Fortenbaugh Internship, Civil War, Civil War Medicine, Pennsylvania College

Disciplines
History | History of Science, Technology, and Medicine | Library and Information Science | Museum Studies | United States History

Comments
The Interns at Gettysburg College’s Musselman Library have been capturing their internship experiences since the spring of 2011. Blogging the Library has evolved since the first post. Early posts up through 2013 are available on Blogger, and more recent posts can be seen on WordPress.

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Do You Doodle?
October 1, 2013
By: Natalie Sherif ‘14

If you were, are, or will become a student, then you have probably thought about doodling during class. Fear not! We are not the only generation to draw in the midst of a lecture.

Today’s research escapade led me to investigate George Currier’s notes from his time as a student at the Medical Department of Pennsylvania College.

Note the sketch of Currier’s Professor, William Darrach, M.D., who taught the Principles and Practice of Medicine.

The notebooks span the years 1849-1850 and include information on diseases, “materia medica,” and surgery.

Oftentimes when I think about history and the people who lived “back then,” I put them on a metaphorical pedestal. They were a perfect representation of a flawless society — minus their poor hygiene. As I perused Dr. Currier’s notes, I realized that he was no different than students today. Perhaps his doodles were a bit
more sophisticated than the average lecture art, but the premise is the same. If nothing else, his intricate
drawings (ships, primarily) indicate that he had to focus even more on the details of his pictures than a
twenty-first student sketching a flower.

This sketch depicts a row of ships in the harbor. The lecture was about
Chicken Pox.

Though this is merely speculation, Currier’s notes provide tangible evidence that people seldom change as a
whole, no matter how much time has passed. We might know more about germs now than they did in the
1800s, but we’re still the same at heart!

Look for Currier’s notes in the exhibit when it opens in February 2014!

Until next time,
Natalie

Titillating Medical Fact of the Week: If you were a surgeon during the American Civil War and followed
Joseph Janvier Woodward’s *Hospital Steward’s Manual*, the Civil War guide on how to properly run military
hospitals, this is how you would clean your tools: “Surgical instruments should be invariably cleaned
immediately after using. Tepid water answers very well for this purpose: hot water is injurious to the
handles; with cold it is more difficult to remove dried blood. A little castile soap may be employed to get rid
of the grease.”**