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Long Lost Freshmen Traditions: The Infamous Dink

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Abstract

Hello and happy Wednesday everyone! This week I have been submerged in a past world in which harassing freshmen was a college sanctioned activity. This chapter in Gettysburg College history finds a voice within my unprocessed collection thanks to the curiosity of Mr. Jerold Wikoff. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Fortenbaugh Internship, Special Collections, College Archive, Archives

Disciplines

Archival Science | Library and Information Science

Comments

The Interns at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library captured their internship experiences since the spring of 2011. Over time the blog has featured Fortenbaugh, Smith, and Holley interns. They shared updates on semester long projects, responded to blogging prompts, and documented their individual intern experience.

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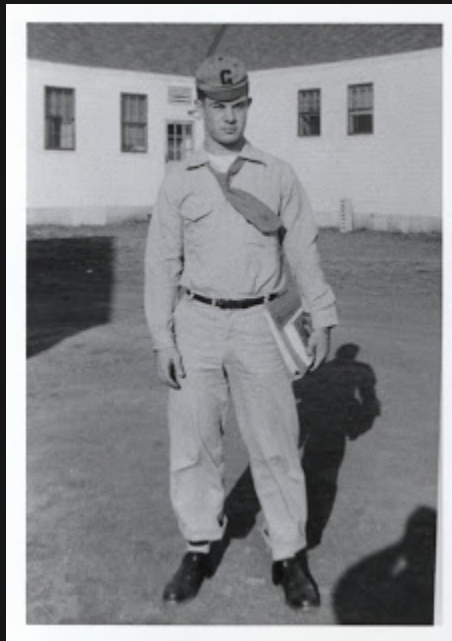
Blogging the Library

The Interns @ Gettysburg College's Musselman Library

Long lost freshmen traditions: the infamous dink

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

By: Sierra Green '11



Hello and happy Wednesday everyone! This week I have been submerged in a past world in which harassing freshmen was a college sanctioned activity. This chapter in Gettysburg College history finds a voice within my unprocessed collection thanks to the curiosity of Mr. Jerold Wikoff.

As I have mentioned in previous posts, my collection is comprised of letters submitted by various alumni to Mr. Wikoff, who was the senior editor of the Gettysburg alumni magazine. Within this collection of letters, there is a group of 11 letters that explain to Mr. Wikoff the freshman tradition of wearing the "dink." The dink was a beanie-like hat that upperclassmen required freshmen to wear upon their arrival to campus. Gettysburg upperclassmen were eager to ensure that freshmen adhered to this tradition; there were even men's and women's tribunals that were in part charged with the task of enforcing the wearing of dinks (you can see pictures of these tribunals in college yearbooks)!

Of the alumni that shared their reminiscences concerning the dink, I really enjoyed reading the memories of Bob Siebold '56. Mr. Siebold remembers having to follow the code of "freshmen correctness" upon his arrival to the Gburg campus. According to Mr. Siebold, this meant donning a wardrobe comprised of "an orange beanie, and orange necktie and a sign which was tied around your neck with a string that stated your name and hometown." In addition to this inspiring and informative attire, freshmen were required to carry with them a book of matches so that, if an upperclassman so desired a smoke, a freshman nearby could graciously render their incendiary services to them.

Mr. Siebold also relates that he and his fellow freshmen classmates had to wear their dinks on campus at all times until the middle of November. At this time, the freshmen's fate rested on the college football team. If the team won their game, the freshmen could take off their dinks, orange neckties, and self-descriptive signs. However, if the team lost, then the freshmen had to don their freshmen wardrobe until Thanksgiving break. For some reason, this part of Mr. Siebold's story reminded me of Punxsutawney Phil and his all important shadow.

In learning more about the freshmen traditions that were once so pervasive at this school, I can't help but wonder how I would have reacted to having a sign around my neck, a dink on my head, and matchbook in my pocket during my freshmen year. All in all, I think these peculiar traditions must have fostered a real sense of solidarity between the freshmen!

Above is a fantastic picture of Mr. Siebold in his freshmen attire in October of 1952(he took off his sign before snapping the picture)

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