Snapping at Millersville

Created by Janet Dotterer
“In a school which prohibited direct social conversation between male and female students, except in certain controlled environments, the young scholars found new ways to communicate. ‘Snapping,’ as it was called, was a way to let your fingers do the talking, a kind of code which conveyed intent without an utterance.” (Dennis Downey, To Thee We Sing, 2004)
Regulations for Students: Relation of the Sexes (1881 Catalogue)

1. It is expected that the ladies and gentlemen of the Institution will treat one another with politeness, and in accordance with the usages of good society.

2. No prolonged conversation between the sexes must take place in the Chapel, in the Recitation Rooms, or in the Halls.

3. At the close of the evening lectures or society meetings, all will repair immediately to their respective rooms.

4. No student shall correspond, meet, walk, or ride with one of the opposite sex, except in case of necessity; and then only with the permission of the Principal. A violation of this rule will be severely punished.

5. Gentlemen students having sisters or cousins in the Institution whom they wish to visit, may obtain Visiting Cards from the Principal, which will admit them to the privileges of the Ladies’ Parlor at certain specified times.

6. Students of the two sexes, other than relatives, cannot meet privately except by the special permission of the Principal. Gentlemen, not students, desiring to call upon lady students, must obtain permission of the Principal. Except for special reasons, no visiting will be permitted on the Sabbath.
In 1882 Elizabeth Fortney wrote this letter giving her idea of “Snapping”:

“...I wish you were here instead of at P.S.C. then you would be my cousin, it is so nice to have a cousin here; and some of the girls don’t have any cousins here, and they go out ‘snapping’ occasionally and get demerited for it. You know, ‘Stolen pleasures are always best,’ and I believe there is considerably of truth in the maxim, for I enjoy a little snap on Sunday evening in the shape of a walk up town, with several gentlemen walking back of us conversing all the way but they are seniors, and will therefore not be demerited and they would have to, as well as us, for speaking together...”
Over the years, the Touchstone staff have poked fun at Snapping and had great fun with art and poetry. Here are just a few examples:
Definition of Snapping from the 1900 Touchstone:

- Snapping. A peculiar sort of conversation between a boy and girl, when nobody else sees them.
An Antidote for Lovesickness.

Symptoms.—Excessive snapping, loss of appetite, pounds of candy, lack of desire to study.

Antidote.—A talk from the Principal. Reasoning sometimes is effective. Demerits, if given frequently, will often restore the mind to its normal condition. Let love take its own way—in time it may wear off. (1904 Touchstone)
And from the 1910 Touchstone:

Snapping.—This word, snapping, is possibly the most versatile word ever produced in the English language. It is, very strange to say, strictly unheard of in any section except about Millersville. It can be used to express the following meaning: To have a quiet little chat with a silly young girl; to have a pleasant (?) little tête-à-tête with Miss Lyle; a committee meeting where there are two girls and two boys; an occasional well-meaning remark to a pretty young girl who is promenading about the lake; going after botany and geology specimens; walking with a girl to and from classes in the science building. We might, in general, draw the conclusion that it means any glance, action, or remark between two persons of the opposite sex.
There were also Snapper Clubs or Associations that were included in the yearbook. Here are a few examples:

**Snappers' Association**

"An Imaginary Reality."

The First Anniversary of the Snappers' Association was solemnized with very impressive exercises in the recently-discovered "grove" on the east side of the campus, at 8 p.m. on the evening of June 15, 1908. The success of the meeting was largely due to the great interest and earnestness which was manifested by each person in the performance of his part. The meeting was one of so much inspiration that it proved the Association is just in its infancy.

The programme ushered was as follows:

**PROGRAMME**

**Singing** — "Everybody Snaps at Millersville"

**President's Address** — "In Unity There is Strength" — Hon. J. Roland Gilbert

**Oration** — "The Underlying Principles in Snapping" — J. William Heim

**Quartette** — "In the Shade of the "Pair" Trees" — "Meet Me at the Lake."

*Clara Metzler*  
*Nellie Strode*

*Mary R. Grove*  
*Ethel J. Dom.*

1908
Snappers Club

Officers
Clarence Mackley, President
Maril Mith, Secretary
Corinne Berrett, Treasurer
Myrtle Bixman, Official Third Party

Active Members
None but officers.
Membership in this club has fallen off for the following reasons:
1. Lack of competent officers.
2. Room "K" investigated.
3.衝克's Lane worn out.
4. Porch posts wrapped with barbed wire.
5. Inclement weather.
7. Faculty raised the Confectionery.
8. We would not wish our sisters to snap.
9. Committee rooms not large enough.
10. Reception room too public.
11. Library well guarded.
12. Recitation Hall too well lighted.
13. Students have not been introduced by the proper authorities.
14. No good places to seclude.
15. The legislature neglected making an appropriation for snapping.

Motto: Two's a pair,
Three's a crowd,
Four's too many;
And five's not allowed.

Snappers Club

President, Raymoni Miller
Assistant Secretary, Eva Kreider
Official Third Party, Viola Grove

Active Members
"Jim" Speice
"Marg" Gallery
Walter Auerstuck
Jonas Brehner
George Myers
"Tobias" Whelan
"Sam" Hill
"Donkey" Strawnbridge

Applicants
Rhea Opie
Sadie Golden
"Eph" Young

Snappers' Club

Officers
Hershy Snyder, President
"Nan" Beal, Secretary
Convenience, Official Third Party

Active Members
"Barb" Ratner
"Madd" Good
Lily Davis
Neil Kringler
Mary Nowles
Lulu Nelson

Backsliders
Esther Ber愉悦
"Daisy" Winder

Honorary Members
Louis McJunkin, Lamar, Miss Mummert, Miss Poteet
To the Snappers

I sing the praises of a band
Enshrouded long in mystery,
That gallant group of snappers brave
Well versed in M/V history.

The autumn’s rather chilling winds
Nor winter’s storm could awe them,
Nor stinging sleet, it took they say,
A ton of coal to thaw them.

The treacherous rains of early spring,
They daily dodged and battled,
Not even summer’s deadly heat
Could get those heroes rattled.

When “Unsung Heroes” is the toast,
Of high or low position
We M/V rooters stand to pledge,
The “Snapper” of tradition.
The official student newspaper, The Snapper, used different mastheads over the years depicting snapping. In the 1920s and 1930s the snapping turtle was used in the masthead and as art throughout the publication. In 1947 the masthead featured a male and female student snapping. In modern times, the Snapper has featured “News in a Snap” for condensed news information.
1926 Snapper featured poetry

Poetry

The Belated Snappers

Across the campus green they went
The blushing maid—the stalwart youth;
They walked and walked and walked and walked
Now really—’tis the truth.

But where they walked when the tower bell rang
For us will hold a lore,
Because it’s very good to know
That there’s a Kitchen door!!!
A lymrick

“I wish I were a turtle,”
(’Twas thus a co-ed pined).
“Then I’d go snapping by myself
And leave the men behind!”
And Snapper Trail
The SNAPPER

Vol. VI

MILLERSVILLE, PA.

No. 1

STAFF
1931 Masthead

THE SNAPPER
ISSUED WEEKLY
In the Interest of the Students of the Millersville State Teachers College
The 1913 catalogue was the first not to list “Relation of the Sexes” with specific regulations laid out regarding the meeting with anyone of “the opposite sex.”