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Investigating Historical Psychological Artifacts on Campus: Mirror Tracing Apparatus

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Introduction

- The Department of Psychology and Family Science holds about 15 pieces of equipment designed for psychological testing in the mid-20th century.
- This semester I began a research practicum on the history of these machines because many of them have not been identified.



Example Catalogue Entry

- Manufacturer: Lafayette Instrument Company, Lafayette, IN
- Name: Mirror Tracing Apparatus
- Description: "a motor skill test of the ability to alter well-learned patterns of hand-eye coordination" (APA, n.d.)
- Model #: Unknown
- Serial #: Unknown

Project Overview

- Identify and catalogue each piece of equipment.
- Determine how each piece of equipment was used in research, testing, and measurement.



Mirror Tracing Task

- Tracer can see own hand and shape being traced in mirror.
- Tracer cannot directly view own hand or shape.
- Tracer starts at one point on the shape and traces the shape until they are back at the starting point.

Resources

- Cummings Center for the History of Psychology
- Library Databases (e.g., PsycINFO)
- YouTube
- American Psychological Association (APA) Dictionary

Project Outcomes

- I learned how to research artifacts in an online archive.
- I learned how motor movements can depend on visual input.