**Historical Ignorance**

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Years ago, a doctor wrote an article entitled, “What’s Keeping David McCullough from Sleeping?” This noted historian and award-winning author had trouble sleeping because he was worrying about what was happening in the country. He was concerned that our leaders “have forgotten about history. They are unaware of the past, and uninterested in how they will be remembered in the future.”

Timothy Goeglein (who was special assistant to President Bush) opened his article with that story to remind us how ignorant our students are about history. One study from years ago by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute surveyed more than 2,500 Americans. “They found only half of adults could name the three branches of government. Only 36 percent of college graduates could do so. Eighteen percent of students tested could not name a single right or freedom guaranteed under the First Amendment.”

The highest performing school on this civics test was Harvard University. But even this prestigious school did not do that well. Harvard scored 69.56 percent. Most teachers would consider that to be a D+. In other words, it would be a failing grade.

A more recent study by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni “found half of all college graduates did not know how long the terms of their representatives and senators were, and 43 percent did not know the First Amendment gave them freedom of speech. A full third could not identify any rights guaranteed by the First Amendment.”

Remember that all the students surveyed are now of voting age and some may be running for public office. Yes, that can keep you from sleeping at night.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/whats-keeping-david-mccullough-from-sleeping-1522005326>