

# Basic Detail Report

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## Consul the Educated Monkey

### Date

1916-1918

### Medium

Tin and paper

### Description

This object is an early 20th century educational movable toy made of tin, called "Consul The Educated Monkey."

Used as a teaching aid for multiplication, addition, and subtraction, Consul is an easy to operate, child-friendly arithmetic calculator. Moving the chromolithographed sheet tin monkey's legs to individual numbers on the slider causes the pivots at the arms to adjust a second slider with a box for singling out those number's product. The toy comes with a separate insertable card for addition and notes on performing division and subtraction by reversing the process. Mathematical devices like this one have a long history, dating at least as far back as the abacus which was invented around 1200 BCE. Consul's inventor, William Henry Robertson, noted in his 1916 patent that his design was different from all preceding mathematical instruments in that, "a number chart has never before been combined with any object resembling and representing a living creature... thereby suggesting the idea of a calculating animal. With such a novel combination, it is intended to interest the child and increase his knowledge of numbers and number tables." Consul the Educated Monkey's influence in popular cultures stems from a real trained monkey: Consul the Great, who travelled to Robertson's Dayton, Ohio workplace in 1910.

### Dimensions

a: 5 1/2 × 6 in. (14 × 15.2 cm) b, unfolded: 5 1/2 × 12 in. (14 × 30.5 cm) b, folded: 5 1/2 × 6 in. (14 × 15.2 cm) c: 3 3/4 × 4 3/4 in. (9.5 × 12.1 cm)