An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away: The History of Healthcare at Sweet Briar College, 1925-1936

Doing Sweet Briar History
Spring 2007
Professor Berg

Natalie Cutchin
206 Robinson Way
Windsor, VA 23487
An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away: The History of Healthcare at Sweet Briar College 1925-1936.

Women have always been and continue to be (to some extent) placed upon a pedestal of sorts by the civilizations and cultures of which they are a part. Especially recognizable in Southern portions of the United States, this pedestal concept in which women were honored for their domestic achievements, was perhaps most evident in the roaring twenties. As Amy McCandless states in her essay “Preserving the Pedestal”, Southern women during the “interwar years” were expected to uphold a certain code of ethics and behaviors and were “often limited by the antebellum image of the lady”\(^1\). Women were thus placed upon a pedestal, so to speak, by their male dominated society and oftentimes forced to conform to an idealistic stereotype so as to fulfill the duties and obligations of their gender (i.e. marriage and child-bearing). They were viewed as weak and submissive, thus while it was deemed necessary for them to be cared for and under the guidance of a more superior individual, women were also responsible for maintaining the wellbeing of their own family through their nurturing and maternal instincts. If a woman suffered from some form of mental disorder or gynecological disease she would be considered unfit for the role of motherhood and thus ultimately a disgrace to her family and associates. For this reason, many such disorders remained unspoken of or were perhaps disguised as something else during this period of American history.

Nervousness, for example, was often used to generalize and mask other more serious

illnesses and was commonly referred to in health records of the time. While mental
disorders and gynecological diseases remained a silent epidemic during this decade, most
communicable diseases were spoken of freely in the public sphere. Here at Sweet Briar
College, such diseases were explicitly documented in local newspapers and various other
such sources throughout the 1920’s and 1930’s, thus further extending the family-like
structure of the campus and the pedestal concept as whole. But did this pedestal concept
truly hinder women from finding their place in society by forcing them to conform to
certain ideals and if this be the case, how is it evident in the medical records and
documents of the time? Did Sweet Briar attempt to break down the social barriers of the
pedestal and if so, what measures were taken by the College to allow women to shift
from the stereotypical maternal caregiver to that of a professional medical worker?
Through examination of the Sweet Briar News, the college paper, college handbooks,
catalogues, yearbooks, presidential addresses, and local Lynchburg newspapers one can
trace the evolution of these gender roles here at Sweet Briar College and thus find the
answers to such questions.

In the first few decades of Sweet Briar’s existence, the campus presented more of
a family atmosphere than it does today. All faculty members were required to be female
and they resided in dorms alongside their students, serving both as educators and mother
like figures to the young women on campus. Not only did their presence serve to ease the
concerns of early students, it also aided in assuring parents that the southern ideal of
womanhood would be upheld during their daughter’s further education. Their child
would be carefully guarded, guided, and held to the same rigorous societal standards as at
home all while being prepared to dutifully serve as an ideal wife and mother. While the

---

2 Lynchburg is a city located a few miles from Sweet Briar’s campus.
gender restrictions regarding faculty members had eased by 1925, the family-like structure of the campus still remained evident in the rules and regulations of the early student handbooks. Throughout much of the 1920’s and 30’s, students who were feeling unwell could have their meals sent directly to their rooms for a mere twenty five cents. In similar fashion to a sick child shouting demands to her parents, the ill student simply had to place an order at least thirty minutes prior to meal time to ensure bedside service. While the Student Government guidelines explicitly stated that lights should be turned off in all dorms by 10 p.m and not to be turned on again throughout the remainder of the night, ill students were considered exempt from this rule and thus once again, just as in a family setting, preferential treatment was shown towards the unwell. Thus while the student’s maintained their fragile nature, being compassionately cared for whenever they felt slightly under the weather, it was the female faculty who took over the role of the mothering caregiver and nurturer catering to the desires of the sick.

The infirmary at Sweet Briar College also offered sick or injured students and even faculty a sense of comfort and a home-like atmosphere. Here, in Miss Mattie’s house, members of the Sweet Briar family received necessary healthcare and treatment from 1907-1925. “Comprised of four bright, pleasant rooms”, the infirmary and its patients were under the care of a resident nurse who lived in an adjoining room to those

3 Young Women’s Christian Association, Sweet Briar Students’ Handbook 1925-1926. Stacks 2, Third Shelf. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.
4 Young Women’s Christian Association, Sweet Briar Students’ Handbook 1925-1926.
5 Prior to this location, the Sweet Briar College Infirmary had been located in one of the towers of the Sweet Briar House. In 1906, the Infirmary was moved from Sweet Briar House, to Miss Mattie’s house, a smaller house on the campus grounds.
of the patients and Dr. Mary Harley, the campus physician (Sweet Briar College Catalogue). While both individuals in charge of healthcare matters were women, thus proving the existence of female medical professionals at this early date, they were seen more for their maternal nature and instincts than for their education and medical training. These women were not only responsible for treating the sick and injured in a purely professional matter but also for providing a sense of home, comfort, and nurturing to such wounded souls.

When the Fergus Reid dormitory was constructed and college enrollment rates increased, “it became apparent that more room would be needed for the infirmary” thus it was “moved to its new and charming home in late October, 1925” where it still remains today. The new Infirmary was a “well-equipped building with a capacity of twenty beds” and special rooms “available for the isolation of patients with communicable diseases”. In 1927, the Infirmary acquired a new infra-red machine “used to back sprains”, a ultra-violet ray “used for skin trouble and malnutrition”, and, perhaps even more important to the students who utilized it, a “delightful addition to the Infirmary’s library” including “about twenty volumes of fiction, mostly Jack London and O’Henry, which will serve to cheer the patients during their stay”. While these technological upgrades signified advances being made in the field of medicine and the greater emphasis

---

7 Sweet Briar Administration, Bulletin Sweet Briar College Virginia Catalogue 1924-1925. Published by Sweet Briar College January 1924. Vol. VII No. 2. Stacks 1, Third Row. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.
8 Sweet Briar Students, Sweet Briar News Wednesday, November 2, 1927. Stacks 2 Second Row. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.
9 Sweet Briar Administration, Bulletin of Sweet Briar College Catalogue 1926-1927. Volume XII, Number 1. Published by the College January, 1929. From the collection of Lois Ballenger, Stacks #1 Third Shelf, Sweet Briar College Archives, Sweet Briar, VA.
11 “The Infirmary”, 26 October 1927.
being placed upon technologically superior healthcare, the addition to the Infirmary library serves as further evidence that healthcare was still, even in 1927, very much a family business.

This privatized family-like healthcare, in which females were not only highly catered to when sick by both friends and family but were also expected to, in the healthcare role, play the part of a nurturing maternal figure, is also evident in various articles in the *Sweet Briar News*\(^{13}\) beginning in 1927. In the newspapers weekly infirmary updates, readers were alerted to the explicit health conditions of both their fellow students and faculty. These weekly alerts told of what the individual was suffering from, if they had been treated at a hospital, as well as their current location at which they could be reached. Sometime in early October of 1927, a Sweet Briar student and a male companion sustained injuries in an automobile accident\(^{14}\). *The Sweet Briar News* states that Miss Mallard received three broken ribs in the accident, however by October 26, she was “improving rapidly, and it is hoped that in two more weeks she will be quite well”\(^{15}\). “Mr. Edward Woodward whose leg was cut in the same accident, was brought to the infirmary for treatment, and then stayed in the Box-wood Inn for about ten days”\(^{16}\). Its is likely that since Mr. Woodward was neither a blood relative of a student nor a member of the Sweet Briar faculty, he was prohibited from nursing his wounds in the campus infirmary and was thus forced to use the lodgings available to his disposal at the Inn instead. As for Miss Mallard, the weekly infirmary updates from November 2 of that same year, claim that she had made a full and speedy recovery and was doing quite

\(^{13}\) The *Sweet Briar News* was a campus newspaper written by the students and for the students of Sweet Briar College.

\(^{14}\) “*The Infirmary*”, 26 October 1927.

\(^{15}\) “*The Infirmary*”, 26 October 1927.

\(^{16}\) “*The Infirmary*”, 26 October 1927.
well. These updates serve to further stress the family atmosphere and privatized healthcare that predominated much of the Progressive era. By permitting both students and faculty alike to stay informed regarding the health status of their fellow classmates and colleagues, the College further allowed for the survival of the Pedestal theory for the sick could thus be cared for not only by the resident nurse and physician, but also by her Sweet Briar "family" as a whole. Through the publication of the illnesses and injuries of her students and faculty, Sweet Briar further exacerbated the weak and submissive image of the woman during this period for she, according to the Southern Pedestal ideal, not only had to be looked after but was also responsible for caring for and maintaining the wellbeing of others.

The *Sweet Briar News* also offers insights as to the medicines and treatments available to combat disease in the roaring twenties. In February of 1928, Sweet Briar student Elsie Jester had come down with a case of scarlet fever, however, after taking an antitoxin for the illness, "the eruption has faded". Another student, Sarah, who had been showing signs of Scarlet Fever symptoms was given a preventative dose and had managed not to contract the disease. It would appear as though Doctor Harley, however, put just as much emphasis on homeopathic remedies and the benefits of the natural environment as she did on actual medicinal treatments and procedures. She often urged Sweet Briar students, much as a mother would her child, to take in as much sunshine and fresh air as possible, eat nutritious foods, and to get a proper amount of sleep. In an address to the student body at Convocation 1927, Dr. Harley stated; "In our

---

17 Sweet Briar Students, "Infirmary has quiet week" *Sweet Briar News*, 2 November 1927, Stacks 2 Second Row. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.
18 Sweet Briar Students, "Infirmary Notes" *Sweet Briar News*, 29 February 1928, Stacks 2 Second Row. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.
19 "Infirmary Notes" *Sweet Briar News*, 29 February 1928.
efforts to absorb sunshine and fresh air, we may resemble a tuberculosis colony; in an
effort to sleep the clock around, we may over-cut our classes — but, nevertheless, we shall
have health and therefore, beauty. It is thus hard to decipher which trait was deemed
more important, to partake in a healthy lifestyle so as to prolong one’s life or to do so, so
as to ensure beauty and thus aid in finding a suitable a husband, a primary objective
according to the Pedestal theory.

Because of the family like structure of Progressive Era Sweet Briar, none of this
seems out of the ordinary, however, I find it ironic that the only patients mentioned in the
weekly infirmary updates were suffering from common communicable diseases (typical
of close-knit small communities) and various physical injuries. There is no mention
whatsoever of mental disorders such as depression, a common illness among today’s
teenagers especially those of college age. There is also no mention of substance abuse or
STD’s, two often prevalent conditions on today’s college campuses. While I do not
doubt that such issues existed, it would appear as though they were simply not mentioned
or perhaps disguised by another form so as to maintain the honor of the individual
involved.

In 1929, we see a shift from the explicit details mentioned in the weekly infirmary
updates to more generalized accounts pertaining to the time of year and various pieces of
health advice. No longer were names and their associated illnesses explicitly mentioned
as these once beneficial weekly infirmary updates became a more generalized health
advice column. In one such column, Dr. Harley speaks of the growing number of
students on crutches in October of 1929. She described the vast usage of these wooden

20 Sweet Briar Students, “Dr. Harley Speaks at Convocation” Sweet Briar News, 19 October 1927, Stacks 2
Second Row. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.
walking aids as a "bad fad" that would soon "pass as did the yo-yo disease, and the
maimed ones will once again be able to manage on all 'fours' with renewed vigor", Dr.
Harley, however, fails to make mention of any names of those students on crutches or
even what injuries have required the use of such aids as had been done in the past.\footnote{21}
Even this shift in journalistic styling indicates changing attitudes regarding the healthcare
profession and the way by which it should be performed. By making mere generalized
assumptions rather than explicit detailed accounts regarding the health status of Sweet
Briar Students as a whole, Dr. Harley was perhaps attempting to stress the importance of
her role more as a trained professional rather than just that of a nurturing mother-figure.

It was this same year 1929, that Sweet Briar lost a vital member of her community
in an "accident" on the lake. While very few explicit details regarding the incident were
released to the public due to the recently altered focus of health related journalism, the
information that was released simply doesn't make sense. Miss Alanette Barlett was a
beloved member of the Sweet Briar community and as an associate professor of French
and member of the faculty for almost two decades; she appeared to exhibit many of the
qualities idealized by the pedestal concept.\footnote{22} Described posthumously by her colleagues
as "eager and joyous in her search for Beauty and Truth, enthusiastic and valiant in her
devotion to Truth, intolerant of the faintest tine of insincerity, hypocrisy, or
indirection",\footnote{23} Miss Bartlett unexpectedly passed away on October 19, 1929. Her brief
obituary in the Sweet Briar News states that she had been under the weather for about two

\footnote{21} Sweet Briar Students, "Crutches, Slings Popular Now" Sweet Briar News, 31 October 1929, Sweet Briar
News Scrapbook 1929-1931. Stacks 2 Second Row. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.
\footnote{22} Sweet Briar Students, "Service Held in Memory of Miss Bartlett: Large Number of Faculty and Students
Stacks 2, Second Row. Sweet Briar College Archives.
weeks prior to her death, even missing the faculty meeting the week before her demise. Although flowers were sent to her residence by her colleagues perhaps as a get well gift on October 15, historical documentation vows that she did not pass away from illness or at least not from the kind that could be freely discussed. This same obituary states that Miss Bartlett actually drowned in the Sweet Briar lake after having fallen from the dam. A handwritten press release found within Miss Bartlett’s faculty file, further pervades this accident theory, stating that a few of the boards were missing from the crossover at the dam and that Miss Bartlett slipped on the exposed rocks. It is ironic, however, that while Miss Bartlett was described in a very desirable manner by her colleagues; she remained unmarried thus never fulfilling her obligation as a woman. Miss Bartlett had been a professor at the college for over 20 years at the time of her death yet she never escalated in rank beyond the title of associate professor, leading one to believe she must have suffered from some serious fault that prohibited her from achieving success in either a professional or domestic sphere thus causing her to end her own life. The truth behind this story may never be revealed for if such scenario’s as before mentioned actually occurred, they would have most certainly not have been made public although had this incident occurred prior to the journalism shift of 1929, it is possible further details and/or explanations would have been offered.

This same year and the year following, President Meta Glass, the president of Sweet Briar College, delivered two identical speeches at the commencement ceremonies.

---

24 Sweet Briar Students, “Service Held in Memory of Miss Bartlett: Large Number of Faculty and Students Attend Simply Rite”, Sweet Briar News, 25 October, 1929
25 Faculty Minutes 1929-1934 Meta Glass, Book Truck #1 Bottom Shelf Black leather binder. Sweet Briar College Archives, Sweet Briar, VA.
26 Sweet Briar Students, “Service Held in Memory of Miss Bartlett: Large Number of Faculty and Students Attend Simple Rite”, Sweet Briar News, 25 October, 1929
of both the University of Virginia School of Nursing in 1929 and the Jefferson Hospital School of Nursing in 1930. Having served as a nurse’s aid overseas in a time of war, Miss Meta Glass had gained an utmost respect for the nursing profession and the women who devoted their lives to it. She felt that although they worked long and hard hours often with little monetary rewards or respect, these nurses would be repaid in the long run with an overwhelming sense of self gratification with the knowledge that they had eased the suffering of another human being27. Not everyone during this time period, however, held the same views as President Meta Glass for there still existed individuals who chung to the pedestal theory, believing a woman’s place to be in the home rather than in hospitals on the front lines or on the corners of city streets thus there were individuals who held a bitter distaste for the nursing profession and the focus it brought on to working women. President Meta Glass, however, was not one of these individuals but rather one who saw “what accomplishments are being made and what greater accomplishments still lie in the future in education in public health through public health nurses”28. Meta Glass thus ended her speech, challenging the female graduates to not be afraid of following their dreams even if it meant being ridiculed and disrespected by those around them for in the end, it did not matter what others thought of them but only what they thought of themselves29. This challenge served to further uproot an already shaky pedestal by proving Sweet Briar’s acceptance of women in vital roles of the medical profession.

27 “Address to the Graduates School of Nursing Jefferson Hospital Roanoke”, Virginia. 27 May 1930. Stacks 3 Second Shelf Gray Box entitled “Meta Glass President of Sweet Briar College”. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.
28 Address to the Graduates School of Nursing Jefferson Hospital Roanoke, 27 May 1930.
29 Address to the Graduates School of Nursing Jefferson Hospital Roanoke, 27 May 1930.
While these shifts undoubtedly marked the beginning of the end of maternal, family-like healthcare here at Sweet Briar College, the true turning point did not occur until a few years later. In 1932, Sweet Briar College took the final measures necessary to educate and train her students for careers in the professional medical field by first instituting a Pre-Medical Science major. Although both the biology club and biology major had been vastly popular among Sweet Briar students in the 1920’s and 30’s, the pre-med major did not see the same successes during its first few years. Graduating only one medically inclined senior in its first four years of existence\textsuperscript{30}, the pre-medical sciences major was “designed for students interested in medical work, hospital technician work, etc.”\textsuperscript{31}. While this shows an obvious shift in gender roles as women gained more respect and acceptance in professional arena, it still fails to make mention of females in positions of leadership and/or prominence such as that of a medical doctor etc and thus proving the continued existence of the Southern pedestal ideal.

Unlike other majors at the time, the pre-medical science major was very flexible and could be catered to match the specific desires of each individual student. The college catalogue\textsuperscript{32} from 1932-1933, explicitly states that since “the entrance requirements for the various medical schools to differ considerably, it would be advisable for the student to select courses from the free electives according to the demands of the institution she

---

\textsuperscript{30} Junior Class of Sweet Briar College, The Briar Patch 1936. Benson Printing Co. Nashville, TN. Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.

\textsuperscript{31} Bulletin of Sweet Briar College Catalogue 1932-1933 Published by the college January, 1929. Volume XII Number I Belonging to Lois Ballenger, Stacks #1 3\textsuperscript{rd} row from top, Archives of Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.

\textsuperscript{32} The college catalogue lists degree requirements as well as available majors and the courses required for each.
Students were thus able to customize their major based on their own particular interests within the medical field.

Pre-med students were required to take at least six hours of Math, 22 hours of Chemistry, 18 hours of Zoology, six hours of Biology, six hours of Physics, 6 hours of Psychology or Sociology, and 6 hours of French or German. Courses such as Evolution, Heredity, and Theoretical Organic Chemistry were also required along with a course on Anatomy and Physiology which was structured primarily on dissections of various vertebrates, a far cry from the educational ideals of the pedestal theory. Although some guidelines and restrictions were offered to pre-med students, much of the major was left to the design of the students. By giving students this freedom, control, and flexibility over their schooling, thus the Pre-Medical Science major at Sweet Briar College not only demonstrates not only the colleges attempt to properly educate her students more professional roles within the healthcare profession but also the ever more unsteady structure of the Southern pedestal.

The introduction of the Pre-Medical Sciences major and the increasing acceptance of women in the professional world, although indicating a major alteration in the roles of women, did not serve to completely break down the barriers of the Southern pedestal concept here at Sweet Briar College. This failure to fully distance oneself from the Victorian ideals of the past is evident even as late as 1935 at the annual Amherst County Day held on Sweet Briar’s campus. Founded in 1922, Amherst County Day was seen as a way by which to unite and bring together the citizens of Amherst County and the

---

33 Bulletin of Sweet Briar College Catalogue 1932-1933
34 Bulletin of Sweet Briar College Catalogue 1932-1933
35 Bulletin of Sweet Briar College Catalogue 1932-1933
students of Sweet Briar College through a series of events and competitions. At Amherst County Day 1935, one such particular event was the “Amherst Baby Contest”\textsuperscript{37}. This event included both a contest and a clinic at which time the babies were to be examined by the local nurse. Sources stated that the children were to be divided into two groups, newborns to six months and six months to a year, and then evaluated by the nurse\textsuperscript{38}. While it is obvious this examination was to ensure the health of the child, it may have been required so that destitute families in the surrounding areas who, due to the effects of the Great Depression may otherwise not be able to afford health care, could have their young children seen by a physician thus exhibiting Sweet Briar’s broadened medical focus which now included the community as a whole rather than the tight-knit Sweet Briar “family” alone. While these free examinations demonstrate a change in Sweet Briar’s medical care focus, the competition included in conjunction with them only further prove the failure of this institution to completely destroy the barriers of our gender.

The competition was, more than likely, a literal measurement of a woman’s successes in life. By penning one woman’s child against another, both Sweet Briar College and the citizens of the surrounding county stressed the continued emphasis placed on the role of motherhood in a competitive yet enjoyable public event. While it is possible this competition tested the intelligence levels of the young children it remains more plausible that it was more of a beauty contest of sorts, a test between mothers to see who could best raise their child. The children were judged at this particular event and

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Lynchburg News}, Green Easy Reference Scrapbook of Mary Helen Cochran Library Archives of Sweet Briar College. Sweet Briar, VA.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Lynchburg News}, Green Easy Reference Scrapbook of Mary Helen Cochran Library Archives of Sweet Briar College. Sweet Briar, VA.
then brought back the following year to determine how well the children had been cared for over the past 365 days, at which time a winner was declared. The winning child, however, was too young to understand the rewards of his/her victory and thus all glory was placed upon the parents. The winning mother was perhaps ultimately considered the most successful woman in Amherst County (at least for that year) for she had fulfilled her societal duties in the most superb fashion by producing the ideal offspring.

Sweet Briar College, without a doubt had opened doors and afforded numerous opportunities to young women who wished to break free of the cultural restraints placed upon them by their society. Unfortunately, in most cases, these restraints were just too strong and all too often the women who attempted to break free, fell miserably back into the role of the weak and submissive nurturer. While Sweet Briar offered her students the opportunity to take advantage of the Pre-Medical major and thus find their place among medical professionals in various arenas of the field, only one woman chose to do so. Even she, however, fell back into the womanly routine. Miss Peggy Campbell, a Sweet Briar graduate in the class of 1936 and the only Pre-Medical Sciences Major from 1932-1936, never finished her medical technician training choosing rather to marry and travel the globe on the arm of her husband. I do not feel Sweet Briar is at fault for this ultimate failure for the pedestal theory had been so deeply engrained in the hearts and minds of all southerners it became difficult to accept anything that did not follow suit. Our beloved institution tried to break down the barriers. Her president acknowledged women as professionals in the medical field, even going so far as to commend them for their actions and challenge others to be more like them and under her extraordinary

39 Sweet Briar Alumnae Magazine 1938. Stacks #1 Bottom Row. Archives of Sweet Briar College. Sweet Briar, VA.
leadership and guidance, a new major was instituted that would allow women to further chase medically inclined dreams as something more than a nurturing female, something that more closely resembled a well-educated and trained medical professional. These actions, however, were simply not enough for although the pedestal was in a constant state of disrepair, it appeared to be crumbling just ever so slightly with only tiny fragments falling from its rigid structure at a time. The pedestal ideal would thus not see total destruction until the women’s rights movements of the 1960’s when women began to fully integrate the job market in numerous professional fields including that of medicine. The social restraints of early twentieth century America were just too much to bear and although numerous measures were taken by this institution of higher learning to break them down, the women at Sweet Briar College were simply no match for society at large.
Annotated Bibliography

Secondary Sources:


In her essay “Preserving the Pedestal, Amy Thompson McCandless, a Sweet Briar alum, introduces her readers to the concept of a Southern pedestal upon which women were placed. She argues that in the early twentieth century, single-sex educational institutions dominated much of the southern region of the United States and vastly differed from their co-ed counterparts of the north. Placed on a pedestal by the patriarchal and predominantly protestant society in which they lived, southern women were expected to conform to a certain idealistic image. This image required that women refrain from all reprehensible activities such as drinking, smoking, dancing, and even socializing with the opposite sex without a chaperone present. Southern single-sex institutions, such as Sweet Briar College, thus intended to educate women not only in the liberal arts but also in the morals and behavioral traits necessary to properly perform their duties as a wife.

Primary Sources:

Young Women’s Christian Association, Sweet Briar Students’ Handbook 1906-Present. Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.

The Student Handbooks serve as a chronological survey of changing rules and regulations throughout the course of Sweet Briar’s history. Explicitly detailing the various clubs and on campus organizations as well as the various rules of which were to be strictly adhered, the handbooks allow researchers to examine the effect of time on both social structure and social regulations. Such rules during the 1920’s included lights off hours as well as regulations regarding co-ed gatherings etc.

Sweet Briar Students, Sweet Briar News 1927-2000. Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.

The Sweet Briar News was a student ran campus paper that was distributed almost on a weekly basis. Although reflecting the bias’ of students and faculty alike, the Sweet Briar News is very useful in examining the thoughts of students on campus while various events were taking place. This source gives wonderful insights into the daily lives of students throughout the course of the college’s history through a wide variety of articles including weekly health updates from the Infirmary (1927-1929), sports related articles, presidential announcements, and often even adds from local businesses.
Sweet Briar Faculty and Administration, Bulletin Sweet Briar College Catalogue 1906-Present. Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.

The college catalogue lists degree requirements for graduation as well as all available majors and minors and which courses are required for each. This source also provides a detailed description of what each course entailed including the topics to be studied and the teaching methods utilized. The college catalogues are thus a great source to use when analyzing shifts in education as they pertained to various world events i.e. the institution of an International Affairs major soon after the outbreak of WWII.

Sweet Briar Faculty Secretary, Faculty Minutes 1906-Present. Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA.

The Faculty Minutes are a great insight into the behind the scenes business and affairs of the college. They consist of detailed accounts of each faculty meeting and information regarding the matters discussed. Often regarding the institution and/or substitution of various classes for degree requirements, the Faculty Minutes also discuss personal issues pertaining to the students such as the course of action for a student failing a particular course or for an individual who has been forced to miss numerous days of classes due to illness. This particular source also allows the reader to analyze the role a particular faculty member played within the administration by following their attendance record, the committees upon which they served, as well as the matters they brought before the council.

Glass, President Meta. “Address to the Graduates of the Jefferson Hospital School of Nursing,” May 27, 1930.

This publication is a complete text of the speech delivered by President Meta Glass at the commencement ceremonies of both the Jefferson Hospital School of Nursing as well as the University of Virginia School of Nursing. In this speech, Meta Glass discusses her own personal experiences as a nurses aid overseas during the First World War. She also explicitly details the respect and admiration she has acquired for the women in the nursing profession. President Meta Glass commends them for their efforts, however, urges them to take up a hobby so as to not wear themselves down from seeing so many people at critical breaking points.


The Briar Patch is the yearbook of Sweet Briar College. This particular source provides both a pictorial and a textual history of the college and her students and faculty. Such a source can be used to trace the evolution of fashion trends over the years by examining the photographs as well as the evolution of the Sweet Briar Community and its structures. Through its documentation of athletics and campus organizations, one can
also trace student involvement in on campus activities. The Briar Patch also explicitly lists the Major of each senior thus allowing researchers to follow trends in popular classes.


This source, like thee *Sweet Briar News*, contains various articles relating to the daily lives of the citizens of Lynchburg and the surrounding communities. Such articles include descriptions of automobile accidents and the injuries involves, local marriages and engagements, obituaries, current events, and various other local happenings. This source covers a wide array of topics, however, only a few articles, those dealing specifically with Sweet Briar and her students, have been preserved over time. If one is attempting to find research on a local topic of interest that does not involve the Sweet Briar Community, they must thus look for *Lynchburg News* articles outside of the Sweet Briar archives.


The *Sweet Briar Alumnae Magazine* provides detailed accounts of the lives of Sweet Briar women after their graduation. Such early editions include information on travel plans, get togethers, further educational opportunities, marriages, and the birth of children etc. This source is an excellent way to trace a particular individuals life after their graduation from Sweet Briar College.