Sweet Briar and Tobacco Row

When the Friends of the Sweet Briar Library held their Spring meeting in 1993, it coincided with the Ewald Symposium focusing upon Native Americans, so those who attended were able to be thrilled by the Great American Indian Dancers, the eloquence of Pulitzer Prize novelist N. Scott Momaday, and intrigued by Kevin Locke’s performance upon the flute and as a hoop dancer.

But to many from Sweet Briar one of the most interesting moments came on Saturday morning when Phyllis Hicks, leader of the local Monacan Indians, spoke of her people’s struggle to preserve their heritage. The efforts of this group, some of whom still live on Tobacco Row at the foot of High Peak behind Sweet Briar, to keep alive their distinctive culture, are ably described in Dr. Peter Houck’s book Indian Island in Amherst County. To Amherst County residents they were traditionally known as "Issues," a term deriving from the phrase "free issues," used to describe the offspring of manumitted slaves; this name was as bitterly resented by the Indians of Amherst County as the word "nigger" was by blacks. As education in pre-Civil Rights Virginia was entirely in segregated schools, the only place in which the Indian population would have been allowed was in schools for blacks; to attend these the Monocan tribe of Tobacco Row absolutely refused. So early generations of these families grew up without any form of schooling, supporting themselves mainly as tobacco farmers.

In the summer of 1906 Sweet Briar College was preparing to open its doors to its first students. The Rev. Arthur Gray, pastor of Ascension Church in Amherst Court House, was a member of the founding Board of the College; one of the first dorms was named after him. His son Arthur Gray II, a student at the University of Virginia, spent that summer tutoring some young women from the county so that they might enter the College as day students. His father persuaded young Arthur to take an interest in the neglected residents of the little Indian colony. The result was that during the summer of 1908, just before Arthur Jr. left to attend the Seminary in Alexandria, a church and school, St. Paul’s Mission, were constructed. The mission school and the College were thus nearly the same age.

The relationship became a close one. The Bum Chums made the Mission their special mission, visiting it regularly to provide recreation for the children. Teachers were provided by the county, rent-free buildings and deaconesses to supervise activities by Ascension Church, whose minister regularly served the Monacan community.

The relationship with the College was warm, although damaged in 1925 by the publication of a book by Arthur Estabrook and Ivan McDougle describing the life of these people under the unfortunate title Mongrel Virginians. McDougle taught Economics and Sociology at Sweet Briar from 1919 to 1924. Their book was based upon information gathered by McDougle’s senior students in sociology and, although it presents itself as a detached scientific study, it is in fact a severely biased attack upon the morals and life of Tobacco Row continued on page 2
Monacan Indians, presented as the “Win” tribe. The book understandably caused bitter resentment among the Monacans but was accepted as justification for all their prejudices by many white residents of Amherst County. In 1924 Virginia passed a “Racial Integrity Act” which forbade marriage between people with any tincture of another race, forcing a number of “Issues” to travel to West Virginia or Maryland if they sought to marry outside their own people.

Bertha Pfister Wailes, an Amherst County student at Sweet Briar (Class of 1917) and who afterwards taught at Sweet Briar from 1924 to 1960, later redeemed the name of Sweet Briar’s sociology department by her sympathetic studies into the “Win” tribe. The relationship remained a warm one. But even after the Civil Rights Act of 1954 Amherst County Schools would not admit the Indians, though they gradually and grudgingly accepted the blacks of the county. In fact Elizabeth Burke Cabell, whose husband Dr. William Cabell had been one of the founders of the county, was the granddaughter of a full-blooded Indian and her first cousin had been the mother of John Floyd, who became Governor of the Commonwealth in 1830.

Finally in 1963 Richmond ordered the admission of 23 Monacan children to the Amherst schools. In 1971 the first of these children graduated from Amherst High School. St. Paul’s Mission closed its school in 1963, there being no further need for it, and the bond between that community and Sweet Briar became less strong, although the early years of integration were not easy for the children from Tobacco Row. But to many of us who lived at Sweet Briar in those days the connection with that community was through Mr. Bowman Nuckles, a member of the Buildings and Grounds staff. With his partner, Mr. Edgar Schaar (who still lives in a retirement home in Roseland), he clipped our hedges, shoveled paths to our front doors when it snowed, with his mule Nelly lovingly tended a beautiful garden at the bottom of the slope behind the nursery school, with tree peonies and roses as well as vegetables. He lived on the one-lane stretch of Waugh’s Ferry Road. It is hard to describe the sweetness of this gentle soul in his baggy pants and benevolent smile. “He was a real gentleman,” says Elizabeth Sprague, long-time professor of biology. Ruth Dickens, who worked in the Book Shop and was a neighbor on Waugh’s Ferry Road, says, “No one ever loved Sweet Briar more than Bowman — every tree, every flower.”

Records do not go back far enough to show when Bowman first was employed at Sweet Briar. In 1944 he was working at the Physical Education Building at an hourly wage of 35 cents. In 1965, five years before his retirement, he was listed as a gardener, then earning $1.65 an hour. On such wages he raised three children and maintained his home garden from which he sold vegetables to his neighbors. I am sure that much of his work was not reimbursed; if it snowed on Saturday night you woke in the morning to the sound of Bowman clearing your doorstep; when the new greenhouse was built Elizabeth Sprague arrived early one morning to find Bowman planting an exuberant climbing rose which was just what that wall needed.

Bowman was much respected by his own people, a lay leader in the mission church, a loving father and grandfather. When he retired in 1970 at the age of 80, Mary Ann Lee, professor of mathematics, gave the College a portrait of him painted by Jen Ayres, a Lynchburg artist, which hung in the Book Store for a long time and then was moved to the Guion Science Library. It caught admirably his shy gentle smile and inherent dignity.

After his retirement he went to Baltimore where one son was a member of the Fire Department, but he died within a year. A handsome cedar tree, *cedrus atlantica*, on the road which runs past Fletcher towards the chapel, opposite the copper beech planted in memory of Miss Dee Long of the English Department, bears a plaque which reads:

Bowman Nuckles
1890-1971
For nearly 60 years
his loving toil
made Sweet Briar more beautiful.

When this was dedicated a memorial service was held, attended by his children and grandchildren and those who had loved him at Sweet Briar.

The portrait was not long ago removed from the Guion Library and was found by the Edgemon sisters stored in the main library. They asked if they could have it and it has hung in Helen Edgemon’s office for the last few years. Where will it go now as Helen retires? It is a touching reminder of Bowman Nuckles and, by extension, of many other of the devoted friends of the College who have served it so quietly with such modest material reward over the years. May it find a fitting home!

by Richard Rowland
Co-Editor of the Library Gazette
Library Planning Task Force Established

President Hill gave the following remarks to the assembled Friends of the Library, announcing the Library Planning Task Force that has been created to prepare a program of Sweet Briar's needs for library facilities.

"The Planning Committee of the College this year has formed a separate task force to investigate the needs of the library, partly in response to our awareness that, as acquisitions increase, the ability of this particular facility to handle it becomes somewhat strained. The committee will have its first major meeting in two weeks, and the task force is composed of people from various constituencies. There are four members of the Board of Directors sitting on the committee, including the Chairman of Buildings and Grounds and two alumnae who are members of the Board. It has four members of the faculty duly elected by the faculty. It is co-chaired by the Dean of the College and John Jaffe. It includes other administrators - Tom Connors, vice president and treasurer and Mitch Moore, vice president for development - and I will be there as a person very passionately interested in library matters. We also have two students who have been recommended by their classes and have been selected to serve on the committee. One is a junior and the other a senior. One of them is a McVeagh scholar, Heather McCoy, who also has an interest in the Friends.

"This group is going to work for about two years developing a sense of what our library needs to function. We are hoping what we plan will be good for 30 years. This is no small order, since we know that technology is affecting libraries at a rapid rate. This sets us some interesting and interesting parameters. We will be developing what is technically called a library program which is a listing of needs in terms of services, and spaces needed to deliver services. Then we will do an analysis of our current facilities and see how much overlap there is or is not. As we move forward knowing that we have to make some changes, we are also operating in the context of new legalities and that everything that we plan to do must pass inspection under the Americans with Disabilities Act. This means that stack spaces, type of shelves and all sorts of other things must meet its requirements. It is a very complicated project, and consequently we do not know what requirements will be forthcoming, but it will be my delight to keep reporting back to you, as I am chair of the Planning Committee, on what has been reported to the Planning Committee by the Task Force. It is a long-range project, but one that is right at the heart of this institution, so you know that we will do our best. Those who have been selected to serve on the committee have been given at least 25 pounds of material by John Jaffe and it is their job to become experts in every aspect of library planning so that when the committee has to make decisions they will know that they are getting expert opinions."

Comments on library facilities and services are solicited from the Friends and all interested parties. Please send comments to John Jaffe.

Thoughtful Responses From Alumnae

The excerpt below from a letter written by Ms. Sharon Bittner '89, provides welcome testimonial to the efforts being made by the library to teach students and faculty the skills necessary to successfully negotiate the increasingly complex world of library information. While individuals often receive verbal comments thanking them for assistance or in appreciation for teaching an individual or class to use the college library, it is very nice to receive thoughtful responses from alumnae.

You probably do not remember me by name, but you might remember my face. I used to study in the library, unlike some graduates, who never even stepped through the front door until their last semester. I graduated from Sweet Briar in 1989. When I came to Sweet Briar, my library skills were pretty much nonexistent. I faked my way through all of the library exercises in grade school, and it showed later in life. Since graduating, I have worked at various jobs, and continued my education. I choose the field of historical archaeology.

In January 1991, I started the master's program in Library Science at the University of Missouri-Columbia. In August of last year, I received my degree. I now realize how much more I could have gotten out of my education at Sweet Briar if I had only used the resources in the library. But, hindsight is 20/20. I have gone from learning how to find books on the shelf by stumbling around the library at Sweet Briar, to being able to run around the entire information collection of the University of Missouri-Columbia with confidence. I have learned so much in a year and a half — and there is so much more to learn! I will admit to having trouble in public libraries (I was looking for a more advanced shelving system than alphabetically by author's name, in the children's section — without realizing just who used that area. I have gotten used to Library of Congress cataloging and classification, and that sometimes causes a little trouble in transition back to Dewey). But I can now walk into a library without being intimidated by the building, collection or the employees, and find what I need.

I received a newsletter from the Friends of the Library announcing the on-line status of the network that Sweet Briar has joined with the Lynchburg area. I am interested in getting into the system to see how it operates. I would love to hear about your experience with converting from a manual to an automated catalog. One of these days I hope to be able to get back to Sweet Briar when the library is open. That way I can see all of the information upgrades that Sweet Briar has made.
Minutes

1993 Spring Friends of the Library Meeting

The Spring Meeting of the Friends of the Library was convened by the Chairman, Peggy Wylie '45 in the Browsing Room of the Library on Friday, April 2, 1993 at 12:30 pm. Those present were: Carolyn Bates, Catherine Booker '47, Diane Davidson, Robin Davies, Judy Davis '35, Laura Goley '52, Barbara Hill, John Jaffe, Lisa Johnston, Joyce Kramar, Nancy Leavell '34, Cheryl Mares, Cathy Mays '84, Denise McDonald, Mitchell Moore, Evelyn Mullen '31, Jane Nelson '66, Toni Nelson, Nancy Rasenberger '51, John Risher, Margaret Anne Rogers '56, Dick Rowland, Clarissa Rowland, Stephanie Speakman '68, Elizabeth Wood '34, Pat Wright.

The minutes of the Fall Meeting were approved as submitted.

Elizabeth Wood gave the Membership Committee report. She stated that approximately 1,500 solicitation letters were mailed out in December to English majors, history majors, past parents who have not given since 1987, the Class of 1945 and freshman parents. A special solicitation letter was mailed to alumnus clubs and another one to faculty members. This time last year we had 158 members with a total contribution of $7,990. This year we have 129 members who have contributed $13,747.00, so that we have fewer members but almost twice as much money than this time last year, and we have two new life members, Stephanie Bredin Speakman '68, and Margaret Anne Rogers '56. (At the end of last year we had 240 members with a total contribution of only $10,950, so already this year we have $2,797 more than we had at the end of last fiscal year.) Ms. Wood pointed out that six life members were present at today's meeting. John Risher, Evelyn Mullen, Peggy Wylie, Judy Davis, Stephanie Speakman and Margaret Anne Rogers. She told us that another solicitation letter will go out this spring and we will have a telethon by students. She also asked for names of those who might possibly become Life Members of the Friends.

Mitchell Moore, vice president for development, stated that he had just discussed with the Friends of Art the idea of "membership renewal notices," in other words, annual dues. One of the things that Friends of Art are looking at is to come up with an annual dues notice payable like any other bill or renewal notice. Mr. Moore feels that this "membership renewal" would be much more effective with current members and even past members in terms of renewing their membership, than another letter. They are already members, presumably interested, and we expect them to continue their membership.

Mr. Jaffe gave the Treasurer's Report for Mr. Hostetler who was unable to be here. Mr. Jaffe proposed that we keep the budget for 1993-1994 at the same level as it is this year. The budget was accepted. Our revenue is up this year due to our life memberships. Mr. Jaffe reported on discussions at the Fall meeting on how we manage the money of the Friends, what happens to membership donations and how the Needs Committee books are funded. An endowment fund was set up in memory of Anne Gary Pannell which has stayed at a fairly stable level. The Finance Committee recommends that this endowment income be distributed in such a way as to provide a base for the annual operating budget, some to be used to build the fund and some to be used to pay for continuations bought by the Friends of the Library. The Finance Committee therefore proposed that life memberships be distributed so that 50% will be added to the Endowment Fund to help build it up and 50% shall go for book purchases. The Friends of the Library accepted this proposal.

President Hill welcomed the Friends of the Library on campus once again for an eventful weekend. She noted that, this year, one interesting thing has happened that will indeed affect the library. The Planning Committee of the College this year has formed a separate task force to investigate the needs of the library. (See page 3)

Cheryl Mares gave the Needs Committee Report. She stated that we had requests that totaled $6,733.39, but funds available were only $2,782.06. The Needs Committee, therefore, had to cut $3,951.33 from the requests. Cheryl moved that the Friends of the Library accept the Needs List, and it was approved.

Mr. Rowland gave the Publications Committee report. He brought to our attention the new format of the Gazette, which is now being produced by the Public Relations Office, and described plans for the next issue.

Diana Davidson gave the Nominating Committee report for Louise Zingaro who was unable to be here. She reported that they are working on the process of selecting council members and will have a report for us in the Fall.

Old Business:

Judy Davis mentioned that in our attempts to raise funds, it might be feasible to encourage memorial gifts, as many of our friends are writers or great lovers of libraries. Mr. Jaffe suggested that we look into these possibilities.

New Business:

The Fall Meeting of the Friends of the Library will be on October 15, 1993.

The Spring Meeting will be held on April 29, 1994. It will be the Friends of the Library's Gerhard Masur Memorial Lecture and suggestions are welcomed for a speaker for this meeting. Susan Otis Thompson has been suggested, so we are trying to track her down.

Mr. Jaffe mentioned that the Bookshop will give a 20% discount on all books to Friends of the Library and Friends of Art.

Peggy asked the Friends to think about sending a library membership card to all members, a reminder really of the privileges that are available to them, as a Friend of the Library as suggested at our last meeting. It would expire each year and be renewable.

The meeting was adjourned.
Nearly 105 Years of Service

Mildred Edgeaxon
(51 years)
Boxwood Inn: 1942-1943
Library: 1943-1993

Helen Edgeaxon
(53 years)
Boxwood Inn: 1940-1946
Library: 1947-1993

Mildred began her career at Sweet Briar at the Boxwood Inn. She started two years after Helen in 1942, but left after a year to accept a position as Stack Assistant at the Mary Helen Cochran Library. She completed a degree at the Phillips Business College in the evenings and later also achieved a three-year diploma in commercial illustration and design.

Her promotion to cataloging assistant and later to cataloging supervisor was a tribute both to her increasing proficiency in cataloging and to her mastery of the various technological aids which have come our way as she progressed from pounding away at a Remington Standard Silent typewriter to the electronic marvels of the OCLC terminal and now the on-line LION catalog. Many faculty members at Sweet Briar remember with gratitude her meticulous typing of dissertations and other publications, all done after she had worked a full day at the library.

Mildred has always maintained that, until a few years ago, she and Helen had moved every book in the library at least once. Having experienced every library addition, renovation, and change over fifty years, that claim is surely an understatement.

We sincerely hope that Mildred will miss all of us as much as we shall miss her. She had been part of our daily lives for such a long time and a constant exemplar that we are unsure how to proceed. With leisure to pursue her interest in art, museum going, country music and her family she, however, may not have time to miss us at all!

Helen began the first of her fifty-three years at Sweet Briar in 1940 under the presidency of Meta Glass and has outlasted six presidents and four library directors. She started her years at Sweet Briar at the Boxwood Inn as a waitress in the days when the Inn served wonderful dinners and lunches for as little as 50¢. Helen's abilities were quickly recognized and she was promoted to assistant manager. In 1947 she joined the library staff as a stack assistant and soon made herself indispensable. Her promotion to periodicals assistant in 1959 was well-deserved. She managed, then, 500 periodical titles with a yearly subscription budget of $3,200. These numbers in 1993 have jumped to over 1,000 titles and a yearly budget of $105,000. Helen's present title of serials and binding supervisor emphasizes her ability to handle the multitude of paper, microform and computer readable materials which flow into the library. Her kindness to and patience with faculty is legendary, and she is even nicer to students. Her ability to remember many of those student faces over the years is equally amazing.

Helen's interest in current happenings, her love of cooking and music (especially country music) will be part of the pleasure of retirement as will the continuing joy of a close knit family of brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews.

To say that we of the Sweet Briar Community will miss Helen and Mildred (I knew I couldn't get through this without mentioning them together) is a large understatement but we can only rejoice that they retire in good health and with many interests to pursue.
The Friends of the Sweet Briar College Library

PURPOSE:

a.) To encourage understanding of the work of Sweet Briar College’s Mary Helen Cochran Library and its branches and to further a realization of the present and future importance of the library to the College’s advancement.

b.) To attract to the College library through gifts or bequests, new resources including funds, books, manuscripts, and other appropriate material beyond what the College budget can provide.

c.) To serve as a medium through which friends of the library may become acquainted and share their enthusiasm for books.

MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

- Subscription to the Library Gazette
- Invitation to annual meetings, together with their meals, lectures, and exhibits
- Circulation privileges in the college libraries: Mary Helen Cochran Main Library Martin C. Shallenberger Art Library Junius P. Fishburn Music Library Fanny B. Fletcher Science Library
- Access to library services including:
  Interlibrary loan
  Computer search services
  Reference services
  College archives
  Video and Audio resources
  Special collections:
    W.H. Auden
    T.E. Lawrence
    George Meredith
    Virginia Woolf
- Opportunity to support the library
- Helping to improve the library collections

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE LIBRARY FACTS

Library services at Sweet Briar consist of four libraries, the main Mary Helen Cochran Library, the Junius P. Fishburn Music Library, the Fanny B. Fletcher Science Library, and the Martin C. Shallenberger Art Library. The library also provides a Media Services Department that includes audio visual support for classes and campus events, manages satellite reception of video materials, and provides audio and video editing facilities.

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Recent Acquisitions Through Gifts of the Friends

The Friends of the Library Council, at its meeting of 2 April 1993, approved the purchase of 46 titles in 60 volumes at a total cost of $2,782.00 from the list of requests submitted by the faculty and approved by the Needs Committee of the Friends. Selected titles from the approved purchases are listed and annotated below.

**CLASSICAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT**

Hughes, Dennis D.
Hughes provides a critical examination of the written and archaeological evidence for the ritual killing of human beings in ancient Greece.

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

Caramagno, Thomas C.
This psychobiography puts to shame virtually everything else written on the tantalizing subject of Woolf's "madness" which Caramagno persuasively argues, to have been a form not of mental dysfunction or insanity but of brain dysfunction — bipolarization or manic depression, that today would probably be controlled with lithium and therapy.

Hejinian, Lyn
This poetic sequence extends from October 1986 to January 1989. It is an intimate expression of the workings of a deeply philosophical consciousness, always questioning the symbols and the qivens that structure our process of thinking and living. One sees a connection with Buddhist thought throughout the work.

Hopkins, Gerard Manley
This long awaited complete edition of Hopkins’s poetry offers serious students far more guidance than has ever been available. The texts are arranged chronologically, rhythms are clarified, thousands of words and phrases are annotated for the first time, and a greater attention is paid to his neglected early output.

Jardine, Lisa
What Jardine offers here is not only a fascinating study of Erasmus but also a bold account of a key moment in Western history, a time when it first became possible to believe in the existence of something that could be designated "European thought."

This collection of selected writings represents some of the best recent critical work on John Milton. The essays cover all stages of Milton's career, from the early poems through his years as polemicist in prose to the late great poems of the Restoration period.

Carruthers, Mary
Going beyond the work of Frances Yates and Paolo Rossi, Carruthers examines the ways in which memory techniques were taught. She also analyzes the role of memory in the creative processes “memorial culture” of the elite during the Middle Ages.

This completely revised and expanded edition of the Arthurian Encyclopaedia is very impressive. Covering Arthurians of all periods, its entries range from the earliest written chronicles to contemporary fiction.

Kihler, Zinn
The first single-volume reference work on the history and culture of medieval France, this information-filled encyclopaedia of over 2,400 entries covers the political, intellectual, literary, and artistic history of the country from the early fifth century to the late 15th.

**ART HISTORY DEPARTMENT**

Kiefer, Anselm
This is an important book, as it is the first public presentation of Anselm Kiefer’s large-format, single edition bookworks. This work is dark, meditative, deeply personal.

Scott, Kathleen
This book catalogues the rich and mostly unstudied illumination of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Simon, Joan
This is the first comprehensive monograph to be published about the life and work of Susan Rothenberg. Simon characterizes this much exhibited artist, who initially gained recognition in the 1970s for reductive paintings of horses, as a link between minimalism and neo-expressionism.

**ART STUDIO DEPARTMENT**

The 48 essays and photographic dossiers in these three volumes examine the history of the human body as a field where life and thought intermingle. They show how different cultures at different times have entwined physical capacities and mental mechanisms in order to construct a body adapted to moral ideas or social circumstances — the body of a charismatic citizen or a visionary monk, a mirror image of the world or a reflection of the spirit.

**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT**

The volumes in this monumental series draw on personal papers of Supreme Court Justices, lower court judges, lawyers, and other key figures, as well as journals, newspaper articles, correspondence, and other political, economic, and legal documents. For the first time the court is examined as it relates fully to the entire fabric of American history, politics, and law.

**HISTORY DEPARTMENT**

Sprinzak, Edud
This important report provides the fullest picture to date of Israel’s extremist right-wing movement and the threat it poses to democratic politics and culture.

Reinharz, Jehuda
It is evident from this first volume of Reinharz’s project two-volume study that this will be the definitive biography of Chaim Weizmann, one of the founders of Israel.

**REFERENCE DEPARTMENT**

Blanco, Richard
No other encyclopedia on the war can match the panoramic scope of this reference work. Its 135 contributors, specialists in their fields, present the facts and their expert interpretations of events, strategies, tactics, weaponry, and the actions of individuals.
Mark your Calendars Now

The Fall Meeting of the Friends of the Library will be held on Friday the 15th of October, 1993.

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The Friends of the Library Welcome
Margaret Anne Rogers '56
as the newest Life Member

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Urge a Friend
to be a Friend For Life

This issue of the Gazette
is dedicated
in gratitude and affection
to Helen and Mildred Edgeaxon
who between them have served
Sweet Briar College
for a total of 104 years,
bringing patience and good humor to meeting
the needs of generations of students
and faculty.
Long may they flourish!

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

Friends of the Mary Helen Cochran Library
Sweet Briar College
Sweet Briar, VA 24595