

# Landmark, Symbol, and Tradition

An Installation for the Sweet Briar Community



Whitley Gallery  
The Sweet Briar Museum  
2015

## THE FOUNDING FAMILY—DAISY WILLIAMS MEMENTOS

Indiana Fletcher Williams founded Sweet Briar College to honor the memory of her daughter Maria Georgiana (Daisy) Williams, who died at age 16 in 1884. This case contains a number of items related to Daisy's life.

Daisy Williams's sketchbook 1882  
pencil on paper

The pad is filled with drawings, each dated exactly, of plants; this page is dated 10 December 1882 and depicts roses.

Daisy Williams's calling cards

enhanced copy of a photograph by the William Kurtz Studio, New York  
*Portrait of Daisy Williams* ca. 1880-1884  
watercolor and pastel

This was charred in the March 1927 fire at Sweet Briar House. The Kurtz Studio photo of Daisy was used for a number of versions of the portrait, including the large pastel that hangs in the West Parlor of Sweet Briar House today.

Straw hat belonging to Daisy Williams

Gold watch, 1884  
Tiffany and Company, New York

This watch was given to Daisy by her parents for her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday—her last. After her death, Indiana gave it to a friend of Daisy's from her school days in New York, Helena Mallory Mellersh. Mrs. Mellersh donated the watch to the College in 1938. It is inscribed "Daisy Williams 1884".

Curl of Daisy Williams's hair, kept by her grieving parents.

The open story book is inscribed "From Papa to Daisy Christmas 1876". Along the vertical spine of the book, on the left in pencil a College librarian wrote "Brought by Signora—June 1931". This refers to Signora Hollins, an African-American woman who worked at the College from the time that it first opened. Hollins had lived at Sweet Briar as a child (her aunt was Indiana Fletcher Williams's cook) and was about the same age as Daisy. They played together. Researchers surmise that the book was a gift to Signora from Daisy's parents after Daisy's death. Signora Hollins donated this book to the College on the occasion of the dedication of the Daisy Williams gymnasium.

Story books given to Daisy Williams by family and friends

Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

## THE LANDMARK BUILDING—SWEET BRIAR HOUSE

Unknown artist

*Sketch of Sweet Briar House* ca. 1845-1855

pencil and watercolor on paper

Collection of The Sweet Briar College Art Collection and Galleries

A.SBH.010

Unknown artist

*Sketch of Locust Ridge (Sweet Briar House)* ca. 1800-1830

watercolor on paper

Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

These two sketches represent distinct phases of the history of Sweet Briar House. The drawing displayed on the left is the later of the two. It represents the house's transformation from a commodious but simple rural gentleman's home into an Italianate villa complete with towers and balconies. Indiana Fletcher and her sister Elizabeth are known to have helped their father, Elijah Fletcher, design the renovations to the house and the establishment of the beautiful boxwood gardens still enjoyed today. At the time, the young women had just returned from a grand tour of Europe. The family library, now incorporated into Cochran Library's rare book holdings, is known to have included fashionable books such as Andrew Jackson Downing's *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (New York, 1855). The drawing on the right, the earlier of the two, records the simpler house, when it was called Locust Ridge, before the Fletchers bought it.

Sweet Briar House has been home to the presidents of the College since its founding in 1901. The former estate residence has been on the Virginia Landmarks Register since the 1970s and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



## THE SYMBOLS

### SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE CREST

Virginia Randall McLaws  
*Sweet Briar College Crest Design* 1908  
pencil on paper  
Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

The College crest was designed by John M. McBryde, Jr., in 1905. He was a professor of English here 1906-1909 and was the son of one of the College's first trustees, John M. McBryde, Sr. McBryde senior was president of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute—today's Virginia Tech. (The McBrydes also designed Virginia's Tech's crest.)

This drawing was made by the College's first professor of art after the junior McBryde's original scheme, featuring elements of Lord Amherst's crest in honor of Amherst County, arrows for the Fletcher family, Tudor roses, and the College motto "Rosam quae meruit ferat."

This appears to be the first official image of the crest. The tears and dirt are evidence that it was much used. This drawing is essentially the "mother" of all the official Sweet Briar crests used to this day. The reverse is inscribed:

Handle with Care  
Return to President's Office  
Sweet Briar College  
Sweet Briar, Va.  
Correct  
Sweet Briar Seal  
outlined by Miss Virginia McLaws  
1908

### SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE MASCOT

Sally deNiord  
*Reynard* 2011  
papier mâché, paint, glass, plastic, wire, and resin  
Gift of the Center for Unfoldment of Heart, Mind, and Spirit and of Patrick K. O'Rourke  
Collection of the Sweet Briar College Art Collection and Galleries  
DC.2011.047

In a nod to the campus's charming rural inhabitants, the Sweet Briar College sports teams adopted the female fox, a vixen, as their official mascot in the 1980s. This decorative work, a recent gift from an adjunct professor, was made by a Lynchburg, Virginia, artist who is known for her mixed media sculptures of animals that are suggestive of Mardi Gras or Carnival masks.

## THE SWEET BRIAR ROSE AND CREST IN EVERYDAY USE

### Sweet Briar College Tableware

#### Sweet Briar College Refectory China

Syracuse China Company, Syracuse, New York

The cup and saucer date to March 1964.

The large and medium size plates date to February 1967.

The small plate dates to March 1971.

All are decorated with pink roses to suggest the College's signature flower.

### Sweet Briar College Refectory Silver-plate Flatware

#### R. Wallace Manufacturing Company, Wallingford, Connecticut

These two salad/dessert forks and butter knife date to the 1930s. All are engraved "SBC" on the handle.

### Sweet Briar College Refectory Linen

The date is undetermined.

The napkin is embroidered with "SBC."

### Sweet Briar College Glassware

#### Michel-Meier Decorating Company, North Rochester, Pennsylvania

Beginning in 1935s the Alumnae Association started selling glassware of a variety of types and sizes, all bearing the College seal, to raise money for the Association and the College. The sorts of pieces shown here—vase, "dinner ashtray", plate, "iced-tea glass", and desert cup—were advertised in the alumnae magazine 1935-1940.

### Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

## COMMEMORATING THE CENTENNIAL

### Sweet Briar College Centennial Quilt 2001

fabric

#### Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

This quilt commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Sweet Briar College. The panels, sewn by alumnae, depict scenes or symbols related to the campus, College traditions, and the school's history. The whole was assembled by Nina Scott of Amherst, Virginia. The panels were made by (left to right):

#### Row 1

Cannie Godwin Crysler Shafer '78

Keedie Grones Leonard '76

Sophie Campbell Brown '36

Ruth Frame Salzburg '58

#### Row 3

Bonnie L. Seitz '01

Julie Brooks '90

Keedie Grones Leonard '76

Ann Marshall Whitley '47

#### Row 5

Ann Marshall Whitley '47

Ann Marshall Whitley '47

Heather Iverson Planck '82

Keedie Grones Leonard '76

#### Row 2

Keedie Grones Leonard '76

Heather Iverson Planck '82

Lisa Stafford Sunderlin '89

Diane B. Dalton '67

#### Row 4

Sophie Campbell Brown '36

Keedie Grones Leonard '76

Diane B. Dalton '67

Heather Iverson Planck '82

#### Row 6

Heather Iverson Planck '82

Adelaide Shinberger Smith '62 &

Mary Baird Shinberger Bell '67

Keedie Grones Leonard '76

Cecelia A. Moore '88

## STUDENT TRADITIONS

### SENIOR ROBE

Beginning in the late 1980s or early 1990s, Sweet Briar seniors have decorated their academic robes with a wide variety of tokens, buttons, tags, and embellishments. Earlier generations of students might simply have sewn a pocket or name label inside. These personalized robes are not those worn at serious events, such as graduation ceremonies, but are used instead for happy, informal occasions such as Step Singing. They are passed along to younger friends in the rising senior class. This robe bears the following names:

Amber Bennett '91  
Leticia Romo '92  
Jill Meadows '97  
Catherine Zahn '98  
Heather McLeod '99  
Thea Okonaka '00  
Meredith Taylor '01  
Tia Trout '02  
Jennifer Stanley '03  
Dayna Gunn '04  
Sarah Hart '06  
Hollie Jennings '07

Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

### FRESHMAN APRON

Lucy G. Shirley [Otis], Class of 1930  
Apron decorated with beads and decals 1926  
cotton, costume beads, parchment decals, ink  
Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

Through the 1930s, Sweet Briar's freshmen were expected to wear aprons for the first few weeks of the fall semester as part of their "initiation" into the life of the College and its community. It singled them out as "new girls" and established their status as the community's youngest members.

For example, the student handbook for 1921-1922 states:

"Freshmen shall wear a uniform apron between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on all days except holidays...from the beginning of classes to Founder's Day."

After these first weeks, the aprons were signed and decorated by friends much like a yearbook and the aprons became cherished mementos. Note the wide variety of hometowns from all over the United States that students recorded, as well as the occasional doodle and fond nicknames.

## STUDENT TRADITIONS

### MAY DAY AT SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

#### Program for May Day, 1910

May Day, which incorporated musical and theatrical performances as well as social events such as gala dances, and an annual horse show, was a regular feature of campus life from the earliest days of the College.

The 1910 entertainment included a concert by the College's Glee Club and Orchestra, Sterndale Bennett's cantata "The May Queen," and "A Legend of Bregenz, A Ballad for Females Voices and Piano," music by Wilfred Ellington Bendall and lyrics from a poem by Adelaide Anne Proctor. "A Legend of Bregenz" relates a tale of a young woman who saves her community through her personal bravery and determination.

#### Photograph of May Court Members, 1929

The students pictured are Elizabeth Lankford [Miles], Eugenia Howard [Jones], Virginia Hodgson [Sutcliff], and Esther Tyler [Campbell]. Lankford, Howard and Hodgson were all from Norfolk, Virginia. Tyler was from Huntington, West Virginia. All were members of the Class of 1929; Hodgson was class secretary.

#### Newspaper Clipping, "May Day Discontinued"

*Amherst New Era-Progress*, 22 May 1969

In 1969, the student body voted supplant May Day with other springtime social activities.

#### Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

### SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE SONGS

This song book, published in 1919, is displayed open to "Sweet Briar, Sweet Briar, Flower Fair," a song that should be recognizable to all the student body and alumnae. This first official College song was written by Mary Pinkerton [Kerr], Class of 1913, and was first published in *The Sweet Briar Magazine*, volume one, issue one, November 1909. In years past, alumnae have often recalled the informal birth of now well-established traditions such as Step Singing. For example, Ruth Schabacker, a young student enrolled in the college preparatory courses called the Sweet Briar Academy, fondly recalled in 1953:

"... How on that lovely spring evening, after dinner, Miss Benedict [the College's first president, Mary K. Benedict] gathered us together on the Refectory [now called Pannell] steps and urged us to adopt the age-old college custom of group singing, telling us how Sweet Briar, too, should have her traditions to pass on. Indeed we do cherish those inspirations and memories..." (*Sweet Briar Alumnae News*, March 1953, p. 15)

The book is copyrighted by the College's Student Government Association. Soon after the College opened for classes, the earliest Sweet Briar students petitioned the administration and faculty to grant them responsibility for running their own affairs. They continue to do so to this day.

## SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE STUDENTS 100 YEARS AGO

Vintage panoramic photograph of the student body of Sweet Briar College, 1914-1915

Thompson Photo Company, Poughkeepsie, New York

Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

1. Frances Pennypacker
2. Louise Whisiker
3. Anne Schutte
4. Harriet Evans
5. Margaret Grant
6. Mary Pennypacker
7. Rebecca Patten
8. Henrietta Washburn
9. Edith Chusty
10. Helen Fry
11. Marion Bacharach
12. Marion Jones
13. Frances Lewis
14. Minette Thompson
15. Dorothy Purcess
16. Jessie Dixon
17. Abbie Monroe
18. Alice [?]
19. Rebecca Martin
20. Helen Hobbs
21. Elizabeth Spahn
22. Marie Reandon
23. Cornelia [?]
24. Julia L Hardy
25. [?]
26. Brice Gill
27. Cora Bryan
28. Vera [?]
29. Lester Randolph
30. Bessie Whilet
31. Nancy Munce
32. Anna Beveredge
33. Mary Barber
34. Marqurite [?]
35. Charlotte [?]
36. Kathrine [?]
37. Mary [?]
38. Rachel Gregg
39. Jessie Johnston
40. Ruth Harvey
41. Laura Porhuan [?]
42. Zalinda Brown
43. September M [?]
44. Rosalie F [?]
45. Miriam Jones
46. Alice Battey
47. Marie B
48. Jane Hendersen
49. Ester Wh [?]
50. Virginia Emmert
51. Helen Bull
52. Maria Spady
53. Fanita Ferris
54. Jeanetta Fitzhugh
55. Ria Thomas
56. Jane Tyler
57. Evelyn Haile
58. Ada S [?]
59. Gertrude Piper [?]
60. Elizabeth Ward
61. Helen Eubant
62. [?]
63. Dorothy [?]
64. Jessie [?]
65. Helen Brown
66. Dorothy Adams
67. Mayorie Johnson
68. Floy Huntley
69. Marguerite Waite
70. Beatrice Bouma [?]
71. Fay Abraham
72. Tubby Webster
73. Claire Sheu [?]
74. Frances Myers
75. Henrietta J [?]
76. Donna Moore
77. Dorthy Bertrau [?]
78. Sara K [?]
79. Cornelia Carroll [?]
80. Giddian Godall [?]
81. Elizabeth Stanford
82. Anne Schutte
83. [?] Sleete
84. Ruth Laud [?]
85. Mayorie Cox
86. Margaret M.
87. Eleanor Pinkerton
88. Florence Ch. [?]
89. Ester Roberts
90. Rebecca Stout
91. Margaret Banister
92. Harriet Harrison
93. Juliet Kirker
94. [?]
95. Margaret Gibson
96. Elsie Palmer
97. May Foster
98. Daisy Guggenheimer
99. Edua Steven [?]
100. Bertha Bridgeforth
101. [?]
102. Bevely [?] Leake [?]
103. Antoinette Camp
104. Punchie Storey [?]
105. Florence C [?]
106. Louise Sprague
107. Betty Newmar
108. Dorothy Schl [?]
109. Katherine McCallen
110. Bo [?] Thompson
111. Constance Krieq
112. Leila C [?]
113. Julia B Scott
114. Del [?] Aryustad
115. Mary Tutweiler
116. Clara Bell Bather
117. Charlotte Kile
118. Dorothy Lydacker
119. Gertrude Borkhoff
120. Helen Redmund

## EQUESTRIAN SPORT AT SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE—HERITAGE

Sidesaddle, ca. 1845-1850  
possibly English  
leather, wood, wool and fibers  
Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

The initials “ILF” are stitched into the pommel of the doeskin seat. Though research is incomplete and on-going at this point, this elegant saddle is thought to have belonged to Indiana Fletcher Williams when she was a young woman in her late teens or early 20s. Indiana’s birth and baptismal records were lost to fire and in her correspondence, legal documents, and on the memorial at Monument Hill her name is only given as “Indiana Fletcher” or the initials IFW. But it may well be that she had a middle name. An older sister named Laura died in infancy two years before Indiana was born and it is possible that Indiana’s parents gave her “Laura” as a middle name to commemorate the lost child.

Elijah Fletcher wrote to his brother 168 years ago this month about his two daughters, Indiana (aged 19 at the time) and Elizabeth (aged 16):

“Inda & Bettie spend much of their time with me here [at Sweet Briar] and seem quite reconciled to retirement and enjoy themselves and spend their time in reading and writing and sewing and music. They have a very fine Piano and a splendid Harp that they purchased in London. They are likewise fond of rambling about and riding with me among the mountains.”

Elijah Fletcher, Amherst, Virginia,  
to Calvin Fletcher, Indianapolis, Indiana,  
9 May 1847

Woven wool blanket, ca. 1880s  
Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

The blanket on the bottom shelf of the glass cabinet, below Harriet Rogers’s boots, is thought to have been used for Daisy Williams’ pony, Bounce. The child’s extant diaries and letters are filled with references to riding Bounce across the Sweet Briar pastures and to her Aunt Elizabeth’s home, Mt. St. Angelo (the current location of the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts).

Two days after her fifteenth birthday, on 12 September 1882, Daisy wrote in her diary:

“Clear and cool. Martha is here today. The leaves are beginning to turn and the cherry trees are bare nearly. I rode to Aunt Lillybells on Bounce with his new bridle and some marigolds in his ears. Nelson went with me. I took her a box of candy.”

She would be dead a little over a year later. Sunk in grief, her mother, Indiana, had servants take the pony Bounce, outfitted with saddle and bridle, up to Monument Hill to visit Daisy’s grave every morning for half a year.

## EQUESTRIAN SPORT AT SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE—HARRIET H. RODGERS

Harriet Howell Rogers was the long-time head of the riding program, for whom the present-day Sweet Briar College riding center is named. She served as head of physical education 1924-1963. The College has been known for its riding program for more than a century and well into the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the welcomed local fox hunting clubs. For example, a highlight of the autumn was the Thanksgiving Day fox hunt, which started from the Quad in front of the Refectory (now called the Pannell Center).

Brown felt fox hunting derby and embellished hunting horn belonging to Harriet H. Rogers. The horn was made for her by J. M. B. Lewis. A Lynchburg architect, Lewis also served as Master of Hounds for the Oak Ridge Hunt in Nelson County (see A. H. Higginson and J. I. Chamberlain, *The Hunts of the United States and Canada: Their masters, Hounds and Histories*, Boston, 1908, p. 132). Cochran Library exhibited a number of his decorated horns in the 1930s (see *The Sweet Briar College Alumnae Bulletin*, May 1939, p. 18). Still today, at shows sponsored by the Sweet Briar College's riding program, an annual trophy in Mr. Lewis's name is awarded for the champion of the adult hunter division.

Hand carved riding crop and fox-hunting whip belonging to Harriet H. Rogers

Program for the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Sweet Briar horse show, 1932

Brown leather hacking boots belonging to Harriet H. Rogers

Collection of The Sweet Briar Museum

