

# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2 | FEBRUARY 2021

## My fellow alumnae and friends,

**What does it mean to love Sweet Briar?** Let me count the ways! February is "I Love Sweet Briar" Month and there are a lot of reasons to love this amazing place:

1. Our college is distinctive and vital in a world that needs more women leaders.
2. Our professors and advisors gave us the voice, the confidence and the will to contribute to our communities and society in a meaningful way.
3. Our faculty deliver a superior education second to none.
4. This place shaped our world view to be stewards for tomorrow.
5. Our classmates gave us lifelong relationships that are irreplaceable.

For these reasons and so many more, please share your thoughts on why you love Sweet Briar on social media with the hashtag **#ILoveSweetBriar** throughout the month of February. Be sure to reach out to your classmates and share why you love Sweet Briar with them — and encourage them to do the same.

On campus, our college continues to confront the hurdles of navigating the impacts of COVID, which every college in America is also facing. That is why we are asking every alumna and friend of Sweet Briar to join our challenge in giving to the Sweet Briar Fund. For alumnae, that means a challenge to reach 30% participation in a year when every gift matters and also makes a tremendous difference to the Sweet Briar community as well as to foundations and other entities that hold participation as an important metric of engagement and sustainability. Therefore, we are putting together challenge donors in every class to show that this year matters more than most.

Show your love for Sweet Briar: Give to the Sweet Briar Fund for the simple reason that Sweet Briar gave us so much. Our current and future students will reap the reward!

With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83  
Vice President for Alumnae Relations, Development, and Communications

PS: Make your gift now at [sbc.edu/give](https://sbc.edu/give).



I  
♥  
**Sweet  
Briar**





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Sweet Briar Fund and Editor of  
The Briar Wire*  
Wanda Vest, *Data Entry Manager*

## John L. Nau III Joins Sweet Briar's Board of Directors

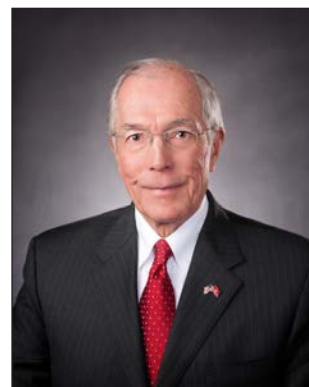
John L. Nau III is chairman and CEO of Silver Eagle Beverages, one of the largest Anheuser-Busch distributors in the nation. Silver Eagle Beverages employs more than 500 employees and services a territory that includes the greater San Antonio area in Bexar County, Texas, and extends over 12 additional counties in southwest Texas. In addition, Silver Eagle Beverages distributes Grupo Modelo beers, a broad selection of national and local craft beers and several non-alcohol beverages and waters.

Nau's commitment to service is apparent through a broad spectrum of participation in civic, community and philanthropic organizations in Texas and throughout the country. His current involvement includes chairman of the Texas Historical Commission, and member ship on the National Park Foundation Board of Directors, American Battlefield Trust Board of Directors, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation Board of Directors, Baylor College of Medicine Board of Trustees, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Board of Trustees, University of Houston Board of Visitors, Honorary Trustee of Texas Heart Institute, Honorary State Trustee for the San Antonio Parks Foundation and Advisory Council member to the Center for Big Bend Studies. He also serves as a Board Member

for Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park, Houston Police Foundation, San Antonio Zoo and The Admiral Nimitz Foundation.

He is a graduate of the University of Virginia and previously served on the board of visitors, a position appointed by the governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He is founder and president of The Nau Foundation.

President Meredith Woo said of his appointment, "As father to two daughters, John believes strongly in the importance of women's leadership. As a conservationist, he has led the nation in protecting our natural environment and our historical legacies. As a longtime supporter of liberal arts education, he has shown a profound commitment to fostering intellectual independence. His values align perfectly with the mission of Sweet Briar. He will be most active on our board, and we look forward to some great things that will transpire from our work together."



## STUDENTS

### Honors Summer Research Program explores various fields of study

#### Abby Cahill '21

"My research this summer investigated potential symbiotic agricultural relationships between interplanted mushrooms and vegetable crops. I also explored the roles of mushrooms in soil health, and conducted scoping work on the potential for mushroom cultivation and other types of forest farming on the Sweet Briar campus. Alternative agriculture is a rapidly expanding field, as climate and environmental issues juxtapose an ever-increasing world population teetering atop an industrialized agricultural system. Holistic, creative solutions, such as the ones investigated in this research, have the potential to help alleviate tensions between environment and society and contribute to efforts to achieve food systems sustainability." Advisor: Lisa Powell



# STUDENTS

## Honors Summer Research Program explores various fields of study (cont.)



### Bijou Barry '23

"I connected with winegrowers across the region to understand the new age culture of grape growing and winemaking in Virginia. I also utilized environmental ethics to examine philosophical applications to viticultural practices and cultivations in wine growing, the lack of diversity and inclusivity within the wine industry and the effects of ethical thinking in economic endeavors and food systems in the wine industry." Advisor: August Hardy

### Lily Peterson '21

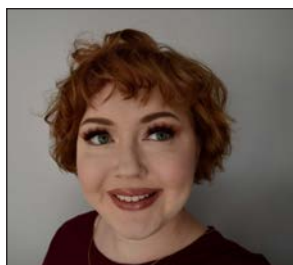
"My project goals were to explore at what level marketing design affects visibility, sales and business success, as well as what trends in design can be considered most successful and how those trends have evolved in the last three decades. I focused on business logos and their color schemes, fonts and overall design. I believe there is value in finding these correlations and psychological preferences for every business willing to try new artistic ideas for visibility and success, but specifically value in benefiting local or starting businesses that may not have the resources for trial-and-error marketing methods. Advisors: Kimberly Morse-Jones, Tim Schauer



### Natalie Carroll '21

"My project focused on how the Civil Rights Movement was influenced by Cold War communism and why that influence was positive. The goal was to gain a better understanding of not only the positive influence but also why the Civil Rights Movement was influenced by Cold War communism."

Advisor: Dwana Waugh



### Nora Florio '21

"I wanted to explore the symbolism and rituals connected with marriage in the Italian Renaissance beyond the arena of artistic representations. In doing initial background research on marriage practices, I was quite surprised to learn that many of the aspects of matrimony that we usually associate with modern marriage—such as having a ceremony in a church, having witnesses present, and having marriage bands—were completely unnecessary in Italian marriages (and those throughout Catholic Europe) until the mid-16th century, when the Church's Council of Trent overhauled marriage regulations. This led me to wonder what were the common rituals and symbols associated with a valid marriage in Italy from the beginning of the Renaissance (c. 1400) until the Council of Trent." Advisors: Lynn Laufenberg, Kimberly Morse-Jones



### Ingrid Kalwitz Blanco '23

"I researched Black firsts, the students that first desegregated schools and their experience. I also researched what happened to former all-Black schools. Specifically, I looked at Chapel Hill's Lincoln High School and Asheville's Stephens-Lee High School, with records easily accessible through the Southern Historical Collection and Southern Oral History Program."

Advisor: Dwana Waugh



# CURRICULUM

## Curriculum Spotlight: Alternative Firing Ceramics Class

Last fall, the need for social distancing led many professors to conduct their classes outdoors. And as you probably remember from your own time as a Sweet Briar student, the announcement of “let’s have class outside in the [insert any one of the amazing options]” was always met with excitement. While students in any field of study can enjoy and benefit from learning in nature, students in the visual arts are especially suited to it. Plein air painting might be the first to come to mind (which was indeed a class held last semester), but ceramics professor Shawn O’Connor and his students can often be found working outside with a wide variety of tools and techniques.

One ceramics class in particular had an impressive purpose and outdoor set-up: Alternative Firing. The class explored processes that are a little less accessible and not so commonplace like raku firing, paper kilns and the horse hair technique. “They’re all a little unpredictable in their results,” said Shawn. “There’s a lot of risk and chance in the outcome. It teaches students about risk management and being OK with results that you weren’t expecting.”

Students built a paper kiln, which is a low-budget and low-tech way to fire ceramics. They made percussion rattles and covered them in clay slip to be fired in the paper kiln. The kiln was essentially a mound of combustible materials (sticks, dead grass, acorns) that was filled with scraps of metal, walnut husks, red berries and other elements that would add color and texture to the rattles during the firing process. Surrounding the mound, students constructed a cone of sticks, wrapped it in chicken wire and covered it in clay slip. Finally, the students lit the kiln on fire from the bottom, watched it burn then dismantled the mound to reveal the finished ceramic rattles.

When asked about teaching and staying creative during a pandemic, Shawn shared this astute response: “Creativity doesn’t wait for that perfect moment, it is found in persistence and dedication of an artistic practice. Artists create to make people look at the world in a different way; to provide hope, challenge social stigmas and provoke change. Creative expression feeds the soul and betters our human culture. Find ways to stay connected and creative in this time of uncertainty, it benefits everyone.” ■



# ALUMNAE

## Watch Lectures from Recent Sweet Briar Days



This year, Sweet Briar Days went virtual. While we missed seeing alumnae and friends in person, this did provide us the opportunity to record the fantastic lectures by our faculty members. See the list of topics and presenters below. Then, scan the QR code to the right using the camera on your smartphone or tablet to visit our website, where you can watch the recordings.



### Transforming Live Theatre into Virtual Productions

Melora Kordos,  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts

### Negative and Positive Partisans' Responses to the 2020 Election

Dr. Jessica Salvatore,  
Associate Professor of Psychology

### Bees, Blooms, and Biology at Sweet Briar College

Dr. Linda Fink,  
Dorys McConnell Duberg Professor of Ecology

### When Words Fail: Where is the Writer?

John Gregory Brown, Julia Jackson Nichols Professor of  
English and Creative Writing

### Sustainability at Sweet Briar College

Dr. Lisa Powell, Associate Professor of Environmental  
Studies and Director of the Center for Human and  
Environmental Sustainability

### The Legacy and Evolution of Sweet Briar Athletics

Jodi Canfield, Ph.D., Director of Athletics  
and Title IX Coordinator  
Hannah Lott, Assistant Director of Athletics  
and Head Field Hockey Coach

### Foreign Policy Challenges for the Biden Administration

Dr. Jeffrey E. Key,  
Division Head of Social Sciences and Humanities

### Ceramics: Alternative Firing

Shawn O'Connor,  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Visual Arts: Studio Arts,  
Acting Director of Galleries and Museum

### Reflections of a Dean During a Pandemic

Teresa Garrett, Vice President of Academic Affairs and  
Dean of the College

### Sweet Briar Founders: Two Centuries of African American Families

Dr. Lynn Rainville, Director of Institutional History and  
Museums at Washington & Lee University  
Former Dean of Sweet Briar College and Former Director  
of Tusculum Institute

### Dare to Believe in Markets: Trust Among Criminals

Dr. August Hardy, Assistant Professor of Economics  
Social Sciences and Humanities



# WAYS TO GIVE

## 2020-2021 Sweet Briar Fund

Each year, the Sweet Briar Fund, our unrestricted annual giving program, supports the College's greatest needs. In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, those needs are:

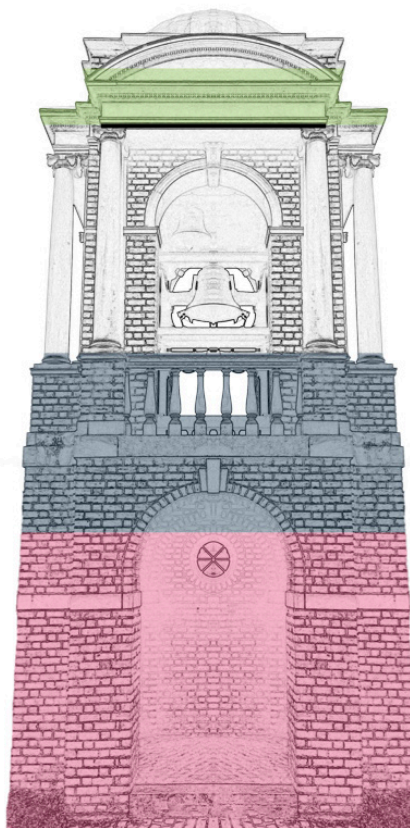
- Scholarships, for our students
- Faculty development and academic programs
- Stewardship of our natural and built environment, from our 2,840 acres to our 22 historic buildings
- Response to COVID-19 increased costs and lost revenue

The Sweet Briar Fund needs your help not just this year, but every year. Every gift makes a difference, no matter the size!

On March 1, we will once again plant a Sweet Briar rose in the Quad to recognize our commitment to Sweet Briar's perpetuity. We began this tradition in 2016 to honor the commitment of alumnae, students, faculty, staff and friends who would not allow the previous year's attempt to close the College to take place. That event also kicks off our March Days of Giving, which you can read more about on page 6.

Make your gift online at [sbc.edu/give](https://sbc.edu/give), or for other ways to make a gift, call the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development at 434-381-6131.

## Unrestricted Giving Progress to Goal: \$7.5 Million



### COVID-19 Relief\*

Goal: \$2.5 Million

Raised: \$1,171,000

### Sweet Briar Fund

Goal: \$5 Million

Total Raised: \$3,355,119

Pledges: \$1.2 million

Received: \$2,155,119

As of Jan. 26, 2021

\* COVID relief funding is also augmented by some restricted grants that we have received.

## Planned Giving: IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) Reinstated for Calendar Year 2021

You may be looking for a way to make a big difference to help further the mission of Sweet Briar College — perhaps you're an alumna and it's an anniversary Reunion year for you (classes ending in 0, 1, 5 or 6). If you are 70½ or older\*, an IRA charitable rollover is a way you can help make a tax-free gift that benefits you and Sweet Briar. The IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) has been reinstated for calendar year 2021. Consider making your RMD gift before June 30, 2021 to help Sweet Briar in this fiscal year (note: an IRA transfer can take up to 2 weeks for your IRA guardian to process).

The benefits of an IRA charitable rollover include:

- Avoiding taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to Sweet Briar College
- Making a gift that is not subject to the deduction limits on charitable gifts
- Helping further the work and mission of Sweet Briar College

How an IRA charitable rollover gift works:

- Contact your IRA plan administrator to make a gift from your IRA to us.
- Your IRA funds will be directly transferred to Sweet Briar College to help continue its important work.
- Please note that IRA charitable rollover gifts do not qualify for a charitable deduction.

\* Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) age:

For individuals who turned 70½ after Dec. 31, 2019, the RMD age of 70½ is increased to age 72. Many loyal donors may choose to increase their IRA rollover gifts after age 72.

Please contact Claire Griffith at [cgriffith@sb.edu](mailto:cgriffith@sb.edu), 434-381-6131 with any questions or for additional information visit our website at [sblegacy.org](https://sblegacy.org).

*This information is provided for educational purposes. It is not intended as legal advice. Please consult your own advisors who alone are aware of your individual situation and thus in the best position to provide an individual analysis and help you accomplish the best result.* ■

# ALUMNAE

## Building a Sweet Briar Legacy Through Admissions

While we might assume that recruiting daughters, nieces, granddaughters and other female relations to Sweet Briar is a novel idea, in fact, Sweet Briar has celebrated our legacy admissions pipeline for decades. In the March 1938 edition of the *Alumnae News* (predecessor of the *Alumnae Magazine*), the editors listed 37 students who were relatives of alumnae and current students. It's clear that recruiting legacy students has always been a priority at Sweet Briar.

Katrina Balding Bills '97 is one of many alumnae who have recruited their family members to consider Sweet Briar for college. However, Katrina took a slightly different approach when discussing Sweet Briar with her niece, Katie Balding '21, as she describes below.



Katrina's parents, David and Shirley Balding, with Katrina's daughter Keara and niece, Katie Balding '21.

Shortly after I graduated in 1997, a niece was born who said "PONY!" before most other words, and that was Katie Balding '21. When her parents were stationed nearby for the Coast Guard, they would bring Katie out to our parents' farm for pony rides and many were on Sweet Briar's pony, Pastry Cart, who had been retired with us. When my husband, Kevin, helped do some work in the west tack room at Sweet Briar, we even wrote Keara and Katie's names on two saddle cabinets, hoping for future legacies!

I loved helping taxi her to riding lessons or hearing about them wherever they were stationed. I made sure to send birthday and Christmas gifts in pink and green and/or fox motifs. As she started competing seriously, and doing quite well, I hoped she would consider Sweet Briar. I tried to not overwhelm her and her family with only SBC information, but noticed other colleges paying attention to her.

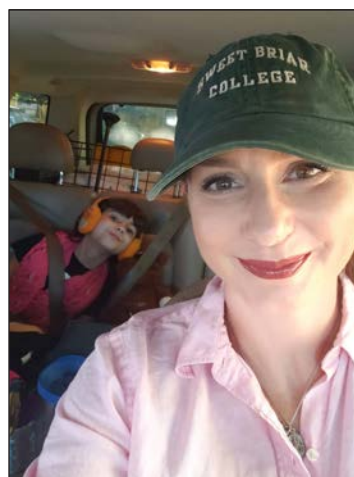
## REFER A STUDENT!

You can personally refer prospective students to the Admissions Office through a referral form found on both the Admissions and Alumnae pages of our website. This is an easy way to volunteer as there is no time commitment or follow-up required. Visit [sbc.edu/admissions/continue-your-sweet-briar-legacy](https://sbc.edu/admissions/continue-your-sweet-briar-legacy) to make your first referral today!

*I upped my game and nightly prayers that she would consider Sweet Briar. She applied and was accepted, and I think my cheers were probably heard all the way to Amherst. As Katie prepped to come to SBC, her Dad got stationed far away. My sister Nicole and I have been lucky enough to be "the B team" and be there for move in days, competitions, and families weekend. Katie has had an incredible four years.*



Keara, Katie and Lily Peterson '21.



Keara and Katrina.

*It has been our family's privilege to cheer for her and all of the Vixens at every opportunity, whether in person or through the computer screen! She has forged her own path beautifully and has truly become a Sweet Briar woman of excellence, character and consequence. When I think of us being a legacy family now, I honestly get choked up. The College is truly a part of our family,*

*and we will keep sending every niece and grand niece pink and green foxy gifts and finding ways to refer them to Admissions. Our own daughter Keara proudly tells everyone she meets that she will be class of 2032. ■*



# SWEET BRIAR FOREVER MONTH



## March Days of Giving

Monday, March 1 – Wednesday, March 10, 2021

### Sweet Briar Fund Goals

March 1: Raise **\$500,000**

March 2–10: Raise an additional **\$500,000** in honor of Indiana Fletcher Williams for her birthday.

### Participation Goal

March 1–10: Increase participation in Reunion classes (classes ending in 0, 1, 5, or 6) to **30 percent**

**HELP US RING THE BELLS!**

**EVERY GIFT MAKES  
A DIFFERENCE!**

### How you can participate:

Make your gift on March 1 or during March 2–10.

*Gifts can be made online at [sbc.edu/give](http://sbc.edu/give) or you can mail a check to PO Box 1057, Sweet Briar, VA 24595.*

Encourage your classmates and friends to join you in making a gift to the Sweet Briar Fund.

Save this page and scan the QR code to the right with the camera on your smartphone or tablet to access our online giving form.





# SWEET BRIAR FOREVER MONTH

## Increased alumnae participation: Giving makes a greater impact than you may think!

For class leaders and staff members alike, alumnae participation is one of those things that is greater than the sum of its parts. On the surface, it's black and white, a simple calculation that gives us a number. Dig a little deeper, and it becomes a formula that represents more than just giving.

Let's start with the technical components. The numerator is the total number of alumnae donors. To calculate participation, we use the total number of solicitable alumnae as our denominator. "Solicitable" means that an alumna has not asked the College to take her off of mailing lists or solicitation lists, and that Sweet Briar has at least one type of contact information on file for her (address, phone or email).

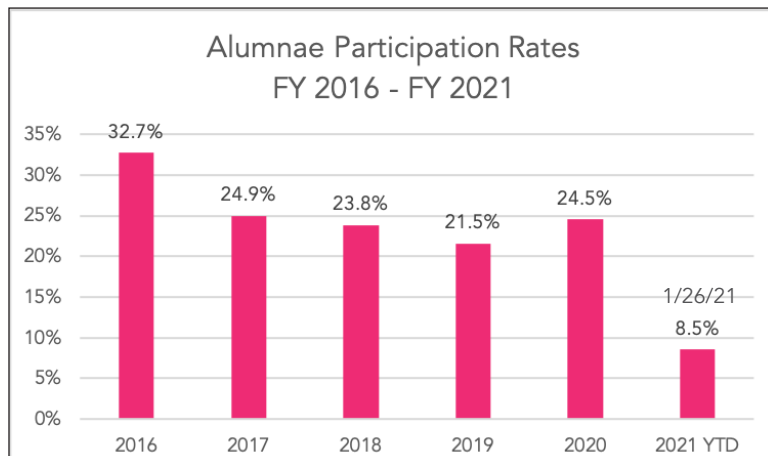
When calculating class participation, the same calculation is used, just on a smaller scale: the total number of donors in that class divided by the total number of solicitable alumnae in that class.

Now, for the "greater impact" bit: Alumnae participation is used by U.S. News and World Report as one of seven factors in ranking colleges and universities. So, the higher our alumnae participation rate is, the higher our ranking will be each year. In addition, many granting agencies that fund colleges and universities use alumni participation as a factor in considering potential grants.

In short, increasing alumnae participation rates at Sweet Briar will make us more appealing to prospective students and their families as well as to potential grantors.

Nationwide, colleges and universities are experiencing a decline in their alumni participation rates. **Last fiscal year (2020), Sweet Briar had its highest participation rate since FY 2016: 24.5 percent!**

For the 2021 fiscal year, Sweet Briar seeks to reach an alumnae participation rate of 30%, close to the same number of alumnae supporters in the 2016 fiscal year. Working with the Class Leaders Working Group of the Alumnae Alliance Council, Decade Chairs, Reunion Co-Chairs, and teams of class leaders from all of the living classes, we will rally alumnae to demonstrate what sets Sweet Briar apart from the rest! To get in touch with your class leaders or the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development, please call (800) 381-6131 or email [alumnae@sbc.edu](mailto:alumnae@sbc.edu).



**2020-2021**

**Alumnae Participation Goal:  
30%**

Current Participation Rate*	8.5% (1,071 donors)
Number of additional alumnae donors needed to reach 15%	829
Number of additional alumnae donors needed to reach 20%	1,284
Number of additional alumnae donors needed to reach 25%	2,095
Number of additional alumnae donors needed to reach 30%	2,729
Total number of alumnae donors needed to reach 30%	3,800

All data based on figures as of Jan. 26, 2021

## SUBMIT AN IDEA

Do you have an idea for Sweet Briar? Please share your ideas for admissions, alumnae activities, and more at [alumnae.sbc.edu/submit-an-idea](https://alumnae.sbc.edu/submit-an-idea)!



# SWEET BRIAR HISTORY

## Sweet Briar's Boathouse and Outing Cabin

As alumnae, students, parents, faculty and staff know, Sweet Briar has no shortage of outdoor spaces. With 2,840 acres of land and 18 miles of trails on campus, there are a wealth of opportunities when it comes to enjoying the great outdoors. In particular, the Outing Cabin and Boathouse have provided students with many opportunities for recreation and celebration over the years.

The Sweet Briar College Athletic Association decided to build a cabin on the College grounds in the 1935-1936 school year. With the blessing of President Meta Glass, students selected a site on Paul's Mountain the following year to erect what became known as the "Outing Cabin." Students lent a helping hand to the superintendent of the Sweet Briar Farm, J. Edwin Dinwiddie, local tradesman who cut, hewed, and cured the logs, which were harvested on site. The students used the lacrosse field to lay out the logs and boards for the walls and windows, and the Outing Cabin was ready for a retreat from academic life in May 1938.

The Boathouse is mentioned briefly in *The Story of Sweet Briar* by Martha Lou Lemmon Stohlman '34 as the idea of John McBryde, member of the College's first board of trustees and president of Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech). McBryde became superintendent for planning the construction of the College and he spared no attention to detail

in envisioning Sweet Briar's campus. We also have McBryde to thank for inviting Ralph Adams Cram to design a beautiful campus for Sweet Briar College. Based on historic references to boathouses on campus in a few publications, we estimate that there was a boathouse constructed on Lower Lake in the early days of the College that was later replaced with our current Boathouse, the drawings for which are dated 1941.

As the pandemic developed last spring, the campus was teeming with outdoor activities that opened our eyes to the importance of recreation and our living laboratory for learning, living, and enjoying the place that is Sweet Briar. The week before Christmas, Mary Pope M. Hutson '83, vice president for alumnae relations, development, and communications, was speaking with an alumna from the class of 1944 whose fondest memory was packing a "tote" and staying the weekend at the Outing Cabin. For most of us, these two historic buildings hold fabulous memories and we hope they will for future students, too.

*Editor's note: The College is currently conducting an assessment of maintenance and stabilization requirements for these two structures and we will report back in May. If you have questions or comments about this article, please contact Clélie D. D. Steckel, director of the Sweet Briar Fund and editor of The Briar Wire, at [cdsteckel@sb.edu](mailto:cdsteckel@sb.edu) or 434-381-6299.*



*The members of the 1911 "Boat Club," which included most of Sweet Briar's student body at the time. Activities on the lake were very popular.*



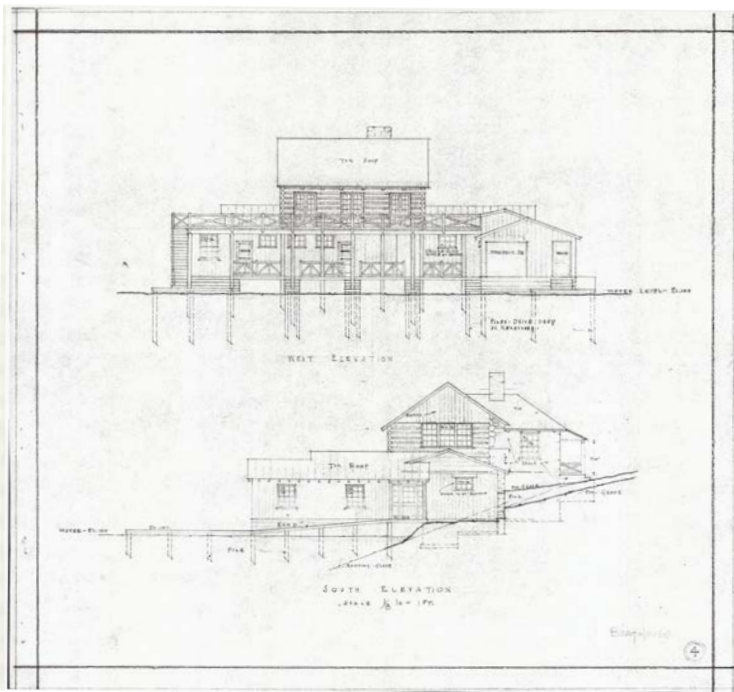
# SWEET BRIAR HISTORY



Students on the upper deck of the Boathouse in the 1942 edition of *The Briar Patch*, shortly after the Boathouse was built.



Students put the finishing touches on the Outing Cabin in 1938.



The elevation plan from the 1941 drawings of the Boathouse.



Students at the Outing Cabin in 1953.



The Boathouse as it looks today.



Students walking from the Outing Cabin in 2011.





Alumnae Relations and  
Development  
P.O. Box 1057  
Sweet Briar, VA 24595

#### RECRUIT A STUDENT

Know a young woman who may be  
interested in Sweet Briar? Visit  
[sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student](https://sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student)  
so she can receive our  
admissions materials!



Whether you come to Sweet Briar or Sweet Briar comes to you (virtually)...

# Reunion is on!

May 27-30, 2021

Visit [sbc.edu/reunion](https://sbc.edu/reunion) for tentative schedules and updates!

