

Article

More than Daughters: Women's Experiences at Southern Baptist Colleges during the Progressive Era

Joanna Lile

History Faculty, Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY 40324, USA; joanna_lile@georgetowncollege.edu

Abstract: This article examines students' experiences at Southern Baptist colleges that educated women during the Progressive era (1880–1920). Denominational leaders and school faculty attempted to recreate Christian home life on college campuses by tightly restricting students' freedoms and behavior. This article examines female college students' publications to better understand their views on family and home life on the college campus. Their writings indicate that students did believe that the college was like a family. However, students reinterpreted the meaning of home life and family on the college campus by reimagining the use of residential space, developing alternative hierarchical and intimate relationships on campus, and exercising more autonomy over their religious rituals.

Keywords: Southern Baptist; colleges; women's education; Christian home; Progressive era

1. Introduction

In 1910, Pearl Todd sensed that she was “standing on the threshold”. Even though her first week at Bessie Tift College had been filled with excitement, she sensed that something was missing. Leaving her parents' home had created, in her words, “a void in my heart”, which “nothing has yet filled”. She was plagued by a “lonely longing for the tender ties of home”. “Here there are so many interests,” Todd wrote, “can there be a deep undercurrent of love and sympathy, a common tie binding the lives together?” Her homesickness finally abated when she attended her first Twilight prayer meeting on campus. She later wrote that it was within that sacred meeting that she finally felt at home. Gathering for prayer, she and her classmates might be transformed into “one large family, a family bound together with sisterly love. . .” (Todd 1910, p. 81).

Scholars who have examined college women's experiences during the Progressive era have recognized the significance of residential life, the explosion of student activities on campus, and the tight restrictions that colleges imposed. (Kett 1977; Horowitz 1984; Solomon 1985; Gordon 1990; McCandless 1999; Walker 2023). This article looks at those realities alongside the competing definitions of home life and family on the college campus. Denominational leaders frequently portrayed Southern Baptist colleges that educated women¹ as extensions of the home, but they typically viewed the composition and function of the college home differently than did students like Pearl Todd. School administrators believed that a college could be an extension of the home if it provided order, emphasized religious devotion, and kept students in a state of quasi-childhood. Student publications such as yearbooks, literary magazines, and newspapers provide windows into the college experiences in often candid, and surprisingly defiant, ways. Their writings indicate that students reinterpreted the meaning of home life and family on the college campus by reimagining the use of residential space, developing alternative hierarchical and intimate relationships on campus, and exercising more autonomy over their religious rituals. Students largely wrote for their fellow classmates, which means that their writings are filled with inside jokes, archaic slang, and passing references to people and customs that can be difficult for modern readers to discern. While these sources can be challenging, historian Gabrielle Walker explains that using such student publications allows us to “listen in, however muffled the voices”. (Walker 2023, p. 21).



Citation: Lile, Joanna. 2024. More than Daughters: Women's Experiences at Southern Baptist Colleges during the Progressive Era. *Religions* 15: 966. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15080966>

Academic Editor: Melody Maxwell

Received: 1 July 2024

Revised: 24 July 2024

Accepted: 29 July 2024

Published: 8 August 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

2. Training Young Men for Ministry and Women for the Home

Baptists in the South founded colleges for men even before the Southern Baptist Convention was created. As Baptists moved west, they founded colleges and academies to train ministers. These early academies offered “a basic education in the ancient languages, English grammar, and mathematics”. (Mathews 1977, p. 87). Later, Baptists in the South founded a number of colleges, including Georgetown College (1829), Mercer College (1837), and Howard College (1841) (Mathews 1977). Over a decade after the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention, Southern Baptists founded their first theological seminary, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in 1859.

While Southern Baptists did not train women to be pastors, they viewed their education as a significant denominational responsibility. Much of the impetus for educating women was grounded in the notion that women, being the primary educators of children, played critical roles in the progress of society (Schweiger 2000). The Great Revival of the early nineteenth century awakened evangelicals to the importance of educating women so that mothers could more effectively steer their children toward Christianity (Solomon 1985). Although the women’s educational movement grew more slowly in the South, evangelicals did establish some early women’s academies (sometimes called female seminaries). The Judson Female Institute, named for Baptist missionary Anne Hasseltine Judson, was founded in Marion, Alabama, in 1838. Virginia Baptists opened the Richmond Female Institute in 1854. Baptists did not establish such schools with the intent of challenging traditional roles for women but rather with motherhood and child-rearing in mind. Evangelicals believed women should be educated “to create respectable, informed, sensible, and intelligent preceptors to shape the next generation of Evangelicals”. (Mathews 1977, p. 120). By offering a separate and distinct academic experience for women, Southern Baptists expanded the role of the Baptist college from one solely devoted to training pastors to one that encompassed instruction they deemed appropriate for women as well.

3. Southern Baptist Women’s Education in the Modern World

Economic and social trends contributed to a dramatic rise in the enrollment of women in college after the Civil War through the first two decades of the 20th century. The expansion of public education, the entrance of more women into the workforce after the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the establishment of new colleges opened doors for more women (Solomon 1985).² Scholars typically refer to women educated between 1860 and 1890 as the “first generation” of four-year college-educated women, with Progressive-era students constituting a “second generation” of college-educated women. These simplistic categories are complicated by regional differences, however, as many Southern women did not have the opportunity to attend four-year colleges until the 1890s, making Progressive-era women the first generation for the South (Gordon 1990). Still, Southern Baptist colleges carried many notable traits of more established “second generation” schools in the North and West, particularly the “flowering of student activities” that were characteristic of this era (Gordon 1990, p. 33).

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Southern Baptist colleges themselves were in transition. As enrollments grew, Southern Baptist schools expanded their course offerings and their campuses.³ Some seminaries and institutes, such as the Judson Female Institute, became four-year colleges for the first time. Monroe College in Forsyth, Georgia, was renamed Bessie Tift College in 1907, and in 1909, the Baptist University for Women in Raleigh was renamed Meredith College. Across the South, institutions that had struggled to maintain high academic standards equal to northeastern colleges began to raise their expectations and expand their course offerings.⁴ (McCandless 1999; Gordon 1990). In addition, several institutions that had traditionally only educated men, such as Georgetown College and Howard College, became coeducational.⁵ With the creation of the Woman’s Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1888, college women could be more effectively recruited to raise funds for missions and were given new opportunities to learn about social reform. Additionally, when the Woman’s Missionary

Union Training School was founded in 1905, college women now had the option of training for missions after college.⁶ (Scales 2000).

In spite of these changes, some antebellum trends remained. For one thing, coeducation was accepted much more slowly in the South, and coeducational Southern Baptist schools like Georgetown and Howard were not yet the norm (Solomon 1985). Even in the twentieth century, Southern women's colleges often looked to the past to inform their policies and standards. Historian Amy Thompson McCandless argues that women's colleges in the South retained the plantation ideal of training students to be "the lady on the pedestal". (McCandless 1999, p. 12). This lady "was to be dependent on men," not economically self-sufficient (McCandless 1999, p. 12). In spite of the expansion of girls' public education and women's work outside of the home in the late 19th century, supporters of women's education "emphasized its applicability to Christian home life" over women's economic independence or intellectual achievements (Gordon 1990, p. 19). Parents therefore valued schools that promised to be "a place to shelter young women until they came of age for marriage, not a place to encourage intellectual development". (McCandless 1999, p. 34). College, then, was a place to protect young women so that they could eventually assume their spousal and motherly roles, but more immediately, they attempted to keep female students "in a state of perpetual adolescence". (McCandless 1999, p. 157).

This complemented the belief that a college education should not dissuade a young woman from marrying. Southern Baptist writer Abbie Benton Bonsteel wrote about this notion in her 1925 novel *Hidden Pearls*. In her book, a young girl named Marcia looks forward to one day being a wife, "the first and highest position that God gave to woman". Her college years play a crucial role in preparing her to be both a Christian wife and mother. Bonsteel believed that girls must use their minds in order to prepare for marriage and motherhood. "The mind must be trained to study, to think deep thoughts, to see and feel beauty, and to embrace the world of arts, science and literature in her realm of learning," Bonsteel explained (Bonsteel 1925, p. 8).

Therefore, in order to prepare young women for motherhood, colleges needed to be as close to a Christian home as possible. Denominational leaders assured parents that they could send their daughters to Baptist colleges with peace of mind. The Baptist campus would be an idyllic place where young women were trained in the faith by parental figures. Colleges that educated women therefore retained many elements of antebellum seminaries. In such institutions, women's lives were defined by insularity and regimentation. Mary Lyon's Mount Holyoke was considered the model female seminary and became a blueprint for other women's colleges (Horowitz 1984). Mary Lyon founded Mount Holyoke on the principle that the seminary ought to train women for the home by educating them in a home-like environment. Lyon required all students to live under one roof, instituted mandatory prayer and meditation, and hired residential female faculty who were instructed to serve as their students' confidants and mentors. In this way, faculty were expected to serve as their students' temporary mothers while they were at school.⁷ (Horowitz 1984). Southern Baptist colleges retained some of Lyon's emphases, particularly mandatory church attendance and prayer in the dormitory. Most Southern Baptist schools also required all boarding students to live together in a single building and to follow highly restrictive schedules with little free time. While some of these practices were based on antebellum customs, historian Joseph Kett argues that Progressive era colleges tended to be even more regimented and structured than earlier generations and that students were kept more dependent on adults than earlier college students (Kett 1977). This was a consequence of Progressive era psychological research that resulted in "the massive reclassification of young people as adolescents" who were seen not so much as dangerous as "vulnerable, passive, and awkward". Experts of this generation largely believed that young people needed much active guidance from adults and authority figures. Youth activities in churches and schools were increasingly planned by adults, resulting in what Kett calls "the artful manipulation of [adolescents'] environment" (Kett 1977, p. 6). Once they began college, students' ability to move about

and interact with the world outside their dormitory, including their own families, was noticeably limited.

4. The Idea of the Southern Baptist College Home

Pastors' and lay people's writings offered glowing descriptions of Southern Baptist schools' home-like atmospheres, and they tended to emphasize these qualities over the schools' academics. The women's dormitory at Georgetown College was called "the most beautiful and commodious boarding hall in all the South". ([General Association of Baptists in Kentucky 1896](#), p. 26). A pastor from Missouri called Bethel Women's College in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, "a marvel," and an institution that was "beautiful. . . homelike, delightful". ([Givens 1922](#), p. 12). Shorter college in Rome, Georgia, was described as "a comfortable College Home," ([Shorter Female College 1890](#), p. 376) and the Judson Institute was called "a beautiful, refined, Christian happy home". ([Alabama Baptist Convention 1880](#), p. 16). Promoters also assured parents that the colleges' surrounding communities were likewise safe and posed no danger to their children. The Georgetown College catalog noted that in town "the moral conditions are safe" and "there is freedom from the temptations and distractions of a large city". ([Georgetown College 1914](#), p. 8). A Tennessee College for Women bulletin explained that Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was a traditional community that embodied "the gentility of the Old South". The bulletin also touted the positive influence its students received simply from living in close proximity to the grand homes that graced the town. The writer of the bulletin exclaimed, "What home ideals are established by such contact!" The bulletin even featured photographs of stately homes near campus ([Tennessee College for Women 1910](#), pp. 22, 31).

While writers were in awe of the beauty of their denomination's colleges and surrounding communities, conditions inside the dormitories had a far greater impact on the students. The notion that female students ought to be governed by parental figures permeated all sorts of writings about college women. A Tennessee College for Women bulletin stated that the school's governance "is such as would be approved in a Christian home of the highest ideals". ([Tennessee College for Women 1910](#), p. 32). Georgetown College promised that its female students would be governed in a "kind and parental" manner, with each student "being regarded and treated as a member of the family". ([Georgetown College 1892](#), p. 38). Implying that the campus was an extension of the president's own home, Tennessee College for Women promoters assured parents that the president and his family resided on campus. The bulletin also boasted that female faculty boarded alongside students, living in the same halls as the young women they taught in the classroom ([Tennessee College for Women 1910](#)). Similarly, the Judson Institute proudly stated that upon entering the school, "[The students] become members of the President's family". ([Judson Female Institute 1890](#), p. 41). The president of Bessie Tift demonstrated his paternalism in a quite visible way by saying a blessing over the students' breakfast in the dining hall every morning ([A Day in a 'Non's' Life 1912](#)). While speaking at commencement "in his fatherly way," the president of Shorter College referred to the graduating students as his daughters ([An Inspiring Scene 1896](#), p. 20).

In imitation of antebellum seminaries, most schools utilized a residential system in which all boarding students lived under a single roof alongside faculty or other women. In a striking example of the attempt to keep students in a state of adolescence, women studying at the Judson Institute were still subjected to supervision by a governess in the 1890s. Later, the title of "governess" was changed to "Lady Principal". ([Judson Female Institute 1894](#); [Manly 1913](#), p. 116). Practices like this were a noticeable departure from the way in which male students were governed. Coeducational Georgetown College's publications omitted all mention of the need to govern men in a "parental" manner, and likewise refrained from describing male students as members of a larger college family. In addition, while all women not living with their parents were required to live in the dormitory, the school did not prohibit non-residential men from boarding off campus ([Georgetown College 1905](#)). In fact, female Georgetown students as a group were so closely associated with their residence

hall that they were often simply called “Rucker Hall Girls” in student publications. On the other hand, men as a group were never known by their place of residence.

Southern Baptist leaders found campus prayer and worship to be another necessary way to create a Christian home-like atmosphere on campus. Progressive-era writers and pastors preached extensively about the importance of family worship (Lile 2012). The family altar was used in household worship and was considered by Southern Baptists to be the proper spiritual center of family life. Without an altar, the home was merely “built on shifting sand”. (*The Sheet-Anchor of the Home* 1917, p. 6). It is difficult to reconstruct what Southern Baptist family altars looked like. Some nineteenth-century households contained a lectern for Bible reading (McDannell 1994). For some families, a lectern may have comprised their family altar, but Colleen McDannell’s research suggests that for many families, the altar was invisible and entirely symbolic. All that was needed was for the family to be together, attentive to the reading of God’s word (McDannell 1994).

School administrators consciously attempted to replicate the “family altar” on campus. The Judson Institute boasted that students and faculty not only shared meals together but “[worshipped] at the same altar”. (*Judson College, Marion, in Sixty-Eighth Year* 1905, p. 4). Faculty members and dormitory matrons were expected to be involved in students’ religious lives by leading devotions and giving talks on faith and Christianity. Faculty members at Bessie Tift conducted Sunday school for students (McMichael 1921). Schools also typically required attendance at daily Chapel services, and Sundays might be filled with several activities, including mandatory silent meditation. Since “[t]he Southern lady was noted for her piety,” these required gatherings were used to prepare the students for their future roles as mothers gathering children around the family altar (McCandless 1999, p. 56). While molding devout women may have been one of the goals, these religious observances signified yet another important way in which students were sometimes kept in a state of quasi-childhood and dependence. At Judson, for example, not only were students required to attend church, they were required to attend the church of their parents’ choosing, having no say in where they worshiped (*Judson Female Institute* 1901). Judson students were also confined to their rooms during silent meditation while the Lady Principal patrolled the halls to make sure students did not leave. Even outside of the classroom, students’ activities and ideas were influenced by administrators and faculty.

Students, however, frequently found such rituals to be burdensome. Judson student Fannie McEntire complained in a parody of the Ten Commandments, “thou shalt be marched to Sunday school, church, mission class, and prayer meeting”. (McEntire 1909, p. 33). Judson student Lillian Bell bemoaned the fact that her dorm room became a “gloomy cell” during the two hours in which she was confined for silent meditation (Bell 1901, p. 37). Sundays were not the only times when students felt extremely restricted, though. Much of the typical day was governed by bells, lights, and other obtrusive sounds and signals that announced the changing activities of the day.⁸ One Shorter College student complained that students had to grudgingly obey the bells “Every day until next June”. (*Shorter Bells* 1900, p. 134). From mandatory daily walks to prohibitions against talking in the halls, students had little choice over how they used their time (*Tennessee College for Women* 1910). Judson student Ruth Sims cautioned that an urge to talk, “sing, whistle, and run” in the hallways would land a student in study hall (Sims 1913, p. 188). A Tennessee College for Women student expressed her frustrations over such restrictive rules in a poem aptly titled “Don’t”.

Dear little girl in Tennessee,
If among the favored you would be,
Please observe the rules below
And your love of regulations show.
When rising bell rings,
Don’t stay in bed;
But put on your middy

And comb your head;
 [...]

Don't study in chapel,
 Lest you should be
 The cause of a burst of severity,
 Don't run in the hall,
 Don't scream and yell;
 Don't make candy after light bell [...] ([Don't 1915](#), p. 122)

"Don't" hinted at their attempts to exert more autonomy by attempting to stay up past the lights-out bell. Notably, the author also singled out Chapel, suggesting that many students believed that it ought to be a time and place to get extra studying in if they needed it. Some students gave up trying to follow every rule, though. A self-described "Ne'er-Do-Well" argued that "Better late than hurry" was the way of wisdom. ([The Proverbs of a Ne'er-Do-Well 1912](#), p. 119).

In addition to the complaints somewhat playfully presented in these poems and stories, students also resented having few opportunities to leave campus. Southern Baptist schools sometimes isolated their campuses by putting up a barrier, such as a tall hedge or a fence ([Walker 2023](#)). One Judson student, fully aware of the purpose of the hedge, commented that the man who allegedly damaged part of the hedge ought to be celebrated along with the school's great financial donors ([Carter 1909](#)). Colleges not only restricted female students' movements but also limited their communication with the outside world. For example, Shorter College prohibited students from receiving packages from home without permission from an administrator ([Shorter College 1909](#)). A Tennessee College for Women student may not have been exaggerating when she complained about having to seek permission before writing a letter to her own mother ([How to Keep Your Privileges 1912](#)). Parents of Judson students had to receive permission from the college before their daughters could go home for a visit ([Judson College 1910](#), p. 44).

All of this amounted not only to an extremely regulated life but to a highly insulated life.⁹ ([Kett 1977](#)). Although students expressed disdain for their relative isolation, their insularity proved to be helpful in creating a strong student culture ([McCandless 1999](#)). Students often embraced the idea, so frequently extolled by denominational leaders, that the college was indeed a family, but their concept was based less on their relationships with faculty and dormitory matrons than it was on their relationships with their fellow students. Student writings furthermore provide no single understanding of the college student "family". At times, they described all of their classmates as "daughters" of the "mother" college. Students almost universally embraced this identity because of the dignity it conferred upon them. Even so, they rarely thought of faculty and staff as parental figures; instead, they thought of the institution itself as their mother. For example, one student celebrated Judson in verse as "Mother Judson". ([When I was a Judson Girl 1903](#), p. 45). At other times, though, their notions of family centered fully on their relationships with specific classes or with specific students. Sometimes, older students saw themselves as "mothers" to younger classmates; at other times, they wrote about fellow students as their siblings. Other students described certain classmates as being more like their spouses or lovers than their siblings. Some students pushed back against efforts to achieve campus unity and a sense of family by choosing to pursue intense, and often short-lived, crushes on other students.

5. Children, Siblings, and Mothers

Older students clearly had mixed motives when they referred to freshmen as "children". Sophomores particularly enjoyed demeaning and humiliating new students with this term.¹⁰ Freshmen frequently complained about sophomores' pranks and their mistreatment of them. "We are not wholly ignorant of the jeers aimed at us by the members

of the higher classes,” asserted Tift freshman Ruth Parker in 1907 (Parker 1907, p. 38). One of the not-so-subtle “jeers” Parker and her classmates endured was having to publish their class news in the college journal on the so-called “Children’s Page”. The harassment from Shorter sophomores inspired a student to refer to the sophomores not as sisters, but as “Brother Sophs”. (Freshman Feast! 1918, p. 30). For many freshmen, then, the first few months away at college were full of teasing akin to what they might receive from an irritating sibling. While calling freshmen “children” seemed to justify the “jeers” thrown their way, the designation served a more complicated purpose as well. After all, such jeering, hazing, and harassment were all parts of freshmen’s initiation into the college family. While they were still “children,” this was a phase they had to endure on their way to becoming mature members of the family.

Labeling certain students as “children” did not entirely denote immaturity and humiliation, either. At times, this designation also signaled older students’ affection for their younger classmates. While sophomores hazed and harassed the freshmen, juniors and occasionally seniors treated the freshmen differently. These older students typically described freshmen as children who needed love, attention, and guidance from older students. It was common at many schools for the junior class to “adopt” the freshmen, thereby beginning the process of gradually mothering and initiating them into the college family.¹¹ (Horowitz 1984; McCandless 1999; Walker 2023). As the two classes were promoted the next year, they remained bonded and cooperated in planning events and other ventures.

Freshman loneliness could be overwhelming, and these early demonstrations of affection from older students were critical to helping them overcome their homesickness. Judson student Annie Pugh described the coldness with which she was greeted by a nameless female employee whom she called “a majestic lady in black”. She was left feeling like “an exile from home” until “some angel in the disguise of a gracious, sweet girl” befriended her (Pugh 1903, p. 129). Judson student Mary Lee Thomas similarly described the comfort she felt in finding an older girl, most likely a junior, who displayed motherly affection for her upon her arrival at school. Thomas was initially saddened as she watched returning students embrace and kiss. Witnessing such emotional and physical intimacy among the other students made her feel homesick until “a kind-hearted older girl comes up and asks if she can be of any service”. (Thomas 1909, p. 64).

Freshmen themselves embraced their status as “children” when expressing gratitude for an older classmate’s attention. At Shorter College, freshmen were proud to call themselves the junior class’s children because of their affection for that class (*The Chimes* 1918). Older students may have also appreciated the fact that the freshman class was associated with childishness because it allowed them to define themselves in opposition to another group. In 1907, Judson senior Caroline Dormon created a drawing that depicted the college student’s journey. In the left hand corner stands a small girl who is labeled “Freshman”. She gazes through a large telescope towards a grown woman standing on a mountain-top. The poised woman, wearing a cap and gown, is the graduating senior. The typical freshman, whom Dormon likened to a small child, is in awe of the senior woman.¹² No longer being a freshman could also mean gaining special privileges that helped a class grow closer together. Shorter senior Georgia King explained how the privilege of sitting at the senior table at meals had helped the senior class grow closer as sisters. Separated from the younger students, the seniors had “grown to be one large family and ties of friendship ever strong grew stronger and made more perfect the sisterhood of this class”. (King 1918, p. 5).

6. Crushes and Romantic Friendships

Even though descriptions of sibling and mother–daughter relationships abounded in student publications, students also showed romantic affection for other students. One class of juniors at Bessie Tift adopted as their class song the “Junior Love Song”. They declared that they were all “Bound by love’s golden clasp”. (*Junior Love Song* 1912, p. 55). More often, though, students professed their love for individual students rather than an entire class. Crushes and romantic friendships were relationships that, by their very nature,

pushed back against the idea that all students were daughters who ought to look to the adults on campus for love and guidance. While antebellum seminaries and nineteenth-century colleges hoped that students would look to female faculty as their role models, students more often found this in their crush ([Horowitz 1984](#)). A Tennessee College for Women student in 1915 defined a “crush” as:

A girl
In whose arms I find
Oblivion of all mankind. ([Dryad 1915](#), p. 122)

Bessie Tift students used their own slang to describe these intense feelings. “Cases” were their crushes, and the word “casing” appears to have referred to flirting with or trying to woo one’s “case”. Whether it was called “casing” or flirting, the younger student tried her best to impress her crush by “bestowing gifts of flowers, candy, poetry, and general adoration”. ([Rouse 2022](#), p. 202; [Solomon 1985](#)).

These relationships were not unusual on college campuses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries ([Rouse 2022](#)). Crushes were so common that students usually mentioned them in passing and presented them as normal parts of college life. When Hattie Etheridge discussed the various “types” of students at Bessie Tift, she included the so-called “casing girl”. According to Etheridge, the “casing girl” could be overheard speaking “in accents soft and passionate”. A typical “casing girl” might say the following to her crush between classes:

Oh Lillian, I am simply crazy about you. Every time I look into your eyes I nearly go mad. You may not believe it, but my heart is breaking all the time. Oh, there’s the bell, I am positive it hasn’t been five minutes. But look here, darling, give me all the rest of your dates for this week, won’t you? There’s nothing worth while but dreams of you. ([Etheridge 1907](#), p. 22)

Crushes and cases came up in musings about other everyday occurrences. One student revealed that her friend Clara was having a difficult time keeping her resolution to not case anymore:

Clara Sargent told me very confidentially that her biggest resolution was to stop ‘casing’ with Bertha Lovvorn. Poor Clara! She is crazy about Bertha, and yet tries awfully hard not to show it. It is positively pitiful. ([January 12, 1908 1910](#), p. 32)

The Bessie Tift class of 1913 embraced this part of student culture so much that they incorporated it into their class toast:

Here’s to the Class of lucky ‘13’
Whose chief occupation is making a scene!
‘Casing’ and flirting, which of course, are all right-
Here’s to our colors, Royal Purple and White! ([Freshman Class 1910](#), p. 73)

Another student wrote that daydreaming about a crush could make paying attention in study hall quite difficult. In this story, the daydreaming student’s pleasant reverie is abruptly interrupted when an instructor “intrudes on this most sacred theme- *perhaps* her beloved case”. ([A Day in a ‘Non’s’ Life 1912](#), p. 153).

Some students acknowledged that these romances might not last. Tennessee College for Women junior Fay Poole wrote of her current crush: ([Poole 1915](#), p. 84)

It may not be the deepest love,
It may not be the truest;
But, oh! It is the liveliest love
Because it is the newest.
Within her arms is perfect bliss;
I feel no pain nor sorrow.
I have no thought but for today;

Oblivion is the morrow.
 And from her darling face a smile
 Will set my heart a-quiver;
 A frown upon that face I love
 Will set my heart a-shiver.
 This love, you see, lasts not forever
 For this maiden I adore,
 For very soon will come another
 Whom I can love, yes, even more.

A story from Shorter College also speaks to the relatively short lifespan of these relationships. The writer quotes a troubled student- perhaps her roommate- who talks in her sleep about her crush who fell in love with another girl:

She haunts me in my dreamy hours,
 I feel and touch her wavy hair,
 I see her smile as she stands there
 Beneath the swaying of flowers.
 [...]
 It is better to have loved and lost

Than never to have loved at all. ([Jest and Jollity 1912](#), p. 33)

Since this story appeared under the “Jest and Jollity” page of the *Chimes*, it may have been the writer’s way of indicating that crushes ought not to be taken so seriously. On the other hand, the writer may have been playing a cruel prank on a classmate by exposing her broken heart.

Aside from the many passing references to crushes, students also used their publications as outlets to express their intense feelings. Crushes might be intense, but they “were typically one-sided” ([Rouse 2022](#), p. 201) as the *Chimes* story illustrates. Students agonized over whether their affections would be reciprocated. Shorter student “E.H.H.” anxiously wrote the following poem to “L.S.S.” in 1899. Like many students, E.H.H. gave her crush a flower:

I sent my lady a rose-
 A rose herself is she;
 I sent my lady a rose
 For the love she gaveth me.

E.H.H. also alluded to the fear of rejection and the uncertainty that came with making herself vulnerable by expressing these feelings:

So I sent my lady a rose,
 With a kiss therein to find.
 Perchance she will- oh! Who knows?
 And then will she- will she be kind? ([E.H.H. 1899](#), p. 68)

When such deep feelings were reciprocated, though, the two students might engage in “physical displays of affection including hugging, kissing, and cuddling”. ([Rouse 2022](#), p. 203). When the relationship lasted longer than the short-lived and often heart-breaking crush, a romantic friendship might emerge. “Romantic friendships shared characteristics of heterosexual romances with exchanges of love and adoration,” historian Wendy Rouse explains ([Rouse 2022](#), p. 201). A few romantic friendships were documented in student publications. For example, in a humorous yearbook essay purportedly written by junior Bessie Simpkins’s stuffed monkey Lulu, Lulu describes all of the goings on in Bessie’s room. She notes, for example, that a student named Mary is very attached to Bessie’s

roommate, Delia. Lulu recounts how Mary helps Delia clean their room and plays “hostess” whenever a group of students comes by to visit. After all the guests leave, “[Mary] and Delia go through with a peculiar little ceremony and then Mary leaves- that is, sometimes she leaves”. Although girls were prohibited from sleeping in their friends’ rooms, Mary was not an infrequent overnight guest of Delia’s. The “peculiar little ceremony” between the two young women at bedtime was given no elaboration ([Lulu’s Diary 1912](#), p. 158).

If the pair moved in together after college, their relationship was known as a Boston marriage ([Rouse 2022](#), pp. 201, 212). Annie Wilson’s and Ruth Violet Hood’s classmates assumed the two would live in a Boston marriage after graduation. They were not only known for frequently blushing around each other but for having a “close companionship”. ([State of Georgia, County Monroe 1912](#), p. 43). One classmate, prophesying what would happen to her classmates in the future, predicted that Annie and Ruth would move to Florida and buy a house together ([His Twelfth Labor: A Prophecy 1912](#), p. 39). Their companionship is also seen in each student’s senior quote. While the quotes were not always to be taken literally or too seriously, the quotes do speak to a student’s character, temperament, or interests. It is unclear if Annie and Ruth chose the quotes or if the yearbook staff wrote them, but each woman’s quote is about the other student. Next to Ruth’s photograph is the statement, “Where Annie is there would I be also”. ([Chiaroscuro 1912](#), p. 23) Annie’s quote, almost surely referring to Ruth Hood, cleverly incorporates the vows of Ruth from the Bible: “Intreat me not to leave thee. . . where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy books shall be my books, and thy schedule my schedule”. ([Chiaroscuro 1912](#), p. 30).

Romantic relationships and courting could also occur within the longstanding tradition of sister classes ([Rouse 2022](#)). Even though Shorter juniors and seniors were fond of calling freshmen and sophomores, respectively, their “children,” the classes also engaged in ceremonies similar to courtship rituals. For example, freshmen invited the juniors to be their “dates” to a Christmas feast, requesting that the juniors, “Come to the gym with yo’ Freshman date”. At the party, juniors and freshmen danced together ([The Chimes 1918](#), p. 32). Similarly, members of paired classes at Shorter exchanged gifts on Valentine’s Day ([Valentine Reception 1916](#)). One night in 1918, members of the Shorter senior class quietly summoned all sophomores to come to the gymnasium. Once there, the seniors, dressed in their black caps and gowns, took the sophomores to be their brides in a mock wedding, sealing their love by giving rings to the sophomore class. The “nuptial knot” had now “made the Sophs and Seniors one”. A student, dressed up as a local minister, presided over the ceremony ([Senior Class 1918](#), p. 38).

Crushes fell under closer scrutiny in the first two decades of the 20th century for a variety of reasons. The temporary nature of crushes, coupled with the fact that they often created jealousy among students, caused some to worry that these relationships were harmful. Baptist University for Women (later Meredith College) student “B.L.” cautioned against “intimate friendships” in 1908. While her criticism may have mostly been directed towards cliques, cliques were similar to romantic friendships since they “gave each other respect and affection akin to love”. ([Solomon 1985](#), p. 98). From “B.L.’s” perspective, these intimate groupings or pairings broke up the college family unnecessarily:

It is perfectly right for a girl to have intimate friends- indeed, the girl who has not is deprived of one of the greatest pleasures of college life; but oftentimes there is a tendency to carry intimate friendships too far, and form ‘sets’. These ‘sets’ are detrimental to the general social life of our University; therefore we do not want them, for they endanger that *oneness* of spirit and feeling which is, in its truest sense, college spirit. ([L. 1908](#), p. 67)

Crushes, cases, and romantic friendships certainly challenged the notion that students were all sisters under the fatherhood of the school president. After all, the so-called “casing girl” was begging Lillian for a date instead of interacting with her as her sister. Not surprisingly, educators and other experts worried about the impact on young women’s sexual development, fearing that long-lasting romantic friendships might discourage women from marrying and having children ([Rouse 2022](#), pp. 202–12). Students who

expressed a preference for living in a Boston marriage were blatantly dismissive of Southern Baptist colleges' aim of preparing women for motherhood. Rouse explains that in spite of the scrutiny, some defiant students "responded to these oppressive efforts to regulate their relationships by developing a range of innovative strategies from subversively concealing their relationships to boldly pursuing their queer desires". (Rouse 2022, p. 202).

7. The "Little House"

Scholars have remarked upon the profusion of extracurricular activities on college campuses during this era (Kett 1977; Gordon 1990; Walker 2023). Students and faculty often negotiated and collaborated to make these activities possible (Walker 2023). Other student activities, however, have received less scholarly attention. These activities were often less well-organized, more spontaneous, and were typically centered around residential spaces rather than athletic fields or classrooms. Since these activities were sometimes illicit, they tended to create bonds of family and friendship that challenged the notions of family that administrators wished to create. These often subversive activities provided ways for students to build their own understanding of the campus family.

For one thing, an important part of students' reinterpretation of the college family was their reimagining of campus space. When students were not in class, engaging in mandatory exercise, or at church, much of their time was spent in the dormitory. Students, in turn, attempted to create a home life in the dormitory on their own terms. Schools were already designed to make this possible in some ways. Dormitories across the South contained "domestic analogies," including parlors and other spaces that imitated the typical features of upper-class home life (McCandless 1999, p. 137). While students surely appreciated these homelike touches, they also took pride in making their dorm rooms more like a home. The desire to turn a modest room into a home is evident in the way that students considered themselves to be a "hostess" when their friends visited their rooms for refreshments and fun. Decorating was one of the first steps to making a room a home. After first finding sympathetic older girls who welcomed her to campus, Annie Pugh began to feel even more at home after "your trunks are unpacked, and pictures, draperies, and bric-a-brac adorn your room". (Pugh 1903, p. 129). At Christmastime, Judson student "Eunice" found so much contentment in her decorated dorm room that she happily called it "our little house". (Eunice 1903, p. 132).

While students appreciated a home-like space, they also showed some resistance to the administration's expectations for home life in the college. Staying up later than permitted and socializing with friends during unauthorized times were very common. A satirical article in *Bessie Tift Journal* reported that the cause of "the phenomenon of strange lights" in the dormitory had been determined. "The lights are caused by the midnight candles of multitudinous young damsels who are only innocently trying to appease their ravenous appetites," Virginius Freeman explained (Freeman 1908, pp. 41–42). Students who stayed up after lights-out frequently did so in order to secretly entertain their friends. If a student wanted to properly entertain her friends, she might need to break a few other rules as well. Students were known to steal food from the dining hall table for later use, skip prayer meeting to make preparations, and steal items such as coconut, milk, sugar, chocolate, spoons, and pans from the kitchen for a late-night feast.¹³ Those who felt any remorse over their theft did not publish their regrets in the literary magazines or yearbooks. Students also enjoyed the challenge of trying to sneak their friends into their rooms for sleepovers. Not only did students enjoy these subversive slumber parties, they prepared surprisingly elaborate feasts for their classmates. Even though they sometimes pilfered the kitchen first, they still relied on relatively limited resources. Students kept chafing dishes and ingredients such as sugar, butter, and even alcohol in their rooms. It was therefore not uncommon for a student to turn her room into an impromptu kitchen, dining room, parlor, and guest room when she wanted to entertain her friends.¹⁴ When feasting was not possible, students altered the structure of the dormitories in quite small, but still effective ways to make their rooms feel more like home. As already noted, silent meditation was part of many students'

Sunday rituals. Judson student Lillian Bell found a way to get around the required solitude even though the governess was patrolling the halls. Since it was too risky to entertain, she and her friends made small holes in the walls to communicate with their neighbors and used carefully placed pictures to hide the damage. (Bell 1901, p. 37).

Students who frequently gathered together for forbidden feasts seemed to have developed a sense of being part of a family. One “family” at Tift was even photographed together for the “club” section of the yearbook with the motto “Blest be the tie that binds”. (The Family 1912, p. 145). Still, other groups that apparently enjoyed late-night festivities also had group photographs taken for their yearbooks. The 1917 Shorter College yearbook mentioned a “Flashlight Club” whose “Place of Meeting” was, “We don’t tell,” and the 1911 Shorter yearbook included the “Seven Cups of Chocolate Club” with a photo featuring members wearing their robes and holding their cups of chocolate.¹⁵ Many schools also mention informal “Chafing Dish Parties” and “Chafing Dish Clubs”. Students also no doubt took an extreme amount of pride in being able to pull off a late-night feast without getting caught. Turning their rooms into their own parlors surely gave some students a feeling of autonomy they lacked in other areas of life. Late at night after faculty were asleep, their room could become their own little household for a few hours, as long as they did not get caught.

8. The College Family Altar

Students also used religious activities as ways to reimagine not only their place in the college family, but their place in society. Students frequently scoffed at the forced chapel and church services that were used to maintain a Christian home life on campus. Rosa Crawford was not impressed by the Bessie Tift president’s Chapel talks or his attempt to play the part of a father figure. “[A]t chapel, Dr. Jackson gave us a ‘family talk,’” Crawford explained, “but he didn’t speak as my papa does”. (Crawford 1907, p. 10). However, students were by no means indifferent towards religion. Religious activities sometimes contributed to the insularity of schools since most religious gatherings were held on campus. At the same time, involvement in religious work provided students opportunities to play a role in “family worship” and brought students in contact with larger organizations and ministries outside of campus.

For some college women, participation in religious organizations was an extremely important part of their college experience. After all, it was at a student prayer meeting that Pearl Todd believed she had finally found her place in the college family. Students also found ways to achieve some autonomy over campus worship and study. Shorter College students, like many others, presided over their own Twilight prayer meetings in the evenings (Young Women’s Christian Association 1911). Local religious leaders and faculty sometimes spoke at prayer meetings, but students were able to choose which pastors or faculty members to invite. For example, while Meredith’s (previously the Baptist University for Women) YWCA invited ministers and scholars to speak at their prayer meetings, they also recruited their own seniors to give talks on missions and Bible study and to lead the music (Y.W.C.A. Department 1910). Even though the goal of Southern Baptist schools was to provide home influence through religious rituals directed by the administration, students also provided this home influence by leading each other. In this way, female students did not reject the idea of having a family altar altogether, but preferred to worship at, in the words of a Bessie Tift student, “the college family altar”. (Morris 1912, p. 2) “Would it not be glorious,” one student mused, “if this [mission] study would result in some girl or girls hearing the voice of the Lord, ‘Whom shall I send?’” In other words, young women might hear and discern their calling while praying and studying alongside their college sisters (Boykin 1907, p. 27). Students were also able to worship in the spaces that felt more like home to them. One Shorter student, for example, noted that young women enjoyed gathering in one of the dormitory’s parlors for prayer time (Harris 1911). These students wished to imitate the religious rituals their families were expected to keep at home, but

they wrote most enthusiastically about prayer meetings when they were conducted by other students and in the dormitory.

Religious work also gave students rare opportunities to practice leadership and learn about missions and social service. In 1876, a group of Judson students decided to honor their school's namesake by organizing the Ann Hasseltine Judson Missionary Society "with the blessing of male leadership". Walker explains that this seemingly small step granted students, "A small measure of independence to be sure, but these small allowances built confidence in women regarding their abilities to lead organizations, manage finances, and assume non-domestic responsibilities". (Walker 2023, p. 76). Many years later, two students at Bessie Tift College took the initiative to establish their college's Young Woman's Auxiliary. Pearl Todd also explained that students took it upon themselves to teach mission study courses and that the student leaders collaborated each week to write the lessons (Todd 1911). Religious activities on campus also connected students to larger denominational entities and gave them opportunities to become involved in social ministries. Women at Southern Baptist schools typically joined the Young Woman's Auxiliary (YWA) of the Woman's Missionary Union, or the YWCA. By joining either group, a student automatically became connected to organizations that were much larger and farther-reaching than their college campuses. Bessie Tift student Esther Cutts was proud to be a YWA member. She insisted that it was "the Y.W.A. that differentiates our Christian colleges from other colleges". She believed that the Y.W.A. fulfilled a promise that colleges made to parents. Parents wanted their daughters to become a "full-rounded young woman," and YWA was an indispensable part of a young woman's maturation. She also noted that a focus on both prayer and "personal service" were significant components of YWA work. WMU's personal service program wedded evangelism and missions to social service (Holcomb 2020). For students like Cutts, then, the value of a Christian college education was not so much in shielding young women from society, but in nudging them outside the walls of the school into mission and reform work so that they might "Go preach the Kingdom of God and heal the sick". (Cutts 1913, p. 226).

Students like Cutts, who spoke of wanting to be of service in the Kingdom of God, were inspired by the "service ideal" that permeated Southern colleges during the Progressive era (Grantham 1983, p. 270). Gordon explains that female students "used collegiate culture as a blueprint for their future, a way of trying out their social responsibilities as educated women". (Gordon 1990, p. 35). Gordon further argues that since Progressive-era women mostly constituted the first generation of college-educated women in the South, they were particularly cognizant of the potential they had to improve society. In Gordon's words, "self conscious about their status as educated women, southern college students explored avenues to make their mark on society, particularly through civic and religious activism". (Gordon 1990, p. 50). Bessie Tift student Mattie Morris assumed that she would attain a respected position in her church and community one day. "What awaits the college trained Christian woman?" Morris asked. "Her greatest opportunity is leadership," she answered. According to Morris, entities outside the home needed the college woman's leadership. "[L]eadership in the social circle, leadership in her school district, leadership in her church;" each area of society needed a college woman "who will lead her comrades wisely, lovingly, and unselfishly!" (Morris 1912, p. 2). Such social involvement went against the official goal of protecting students from the outside world. Students like Cutts and Morris may have each imagined themselves to be what Walker terms the "New Baptist Woman," a woman "who saw the Christian Gospel as liberating women from the constraints of home and hearth and saw themselves as reclaiming a forgotten spiritual legacy". (Walker 2023, p. 126).

9. Conclusions

In the story "Judson in Summer," Judson College is personified. The mother school longs for her students to return from summer vacation. Judson calls the students "my children," but instead of being perpetual adolescents they are also "Women-in-the-Making" who will "reflect honor on these bleak walls". Mother Judson expected her children to

marry but predicted that they would also “minister to suffering humanity in the lonely walks of life”. She anticipated welcoming an array of students into her family. Some would be “thoughtless and frivolous,” and some would be “thoughtful and purposeful”. (Holloway 1917, p. 137). This brief story reveals the ambiguities surrounding the students’ place in the college family and their relationship to the larger world. Even though schools often operated under the assumption that female students were and ought to remain adolescents, students did not always see themselves that way. The 1917 Shorter yearbook featured a sketch of milestones the senior class had experienced during their four years. Feasting with classmates, terrorizing the freshmen, the sophomore–senior wedding, dancing with another girl while the Victrola played in the background, and sneaking out of the dormitory were all presented as part of the journey to becoming a dignified graduate. The artist did not condemn any of the small transgressions illustrated in the story but presented them as a normal part of the college experience. This illustration also reveals the many roles that students played in the campus family and the many ways they tried to make college a home on their own terms (Knight 1917, p. 198). For many college women, rejecting some elements of the family structure imposed on them by their school was a normal part of their college experience. Moreover, some students came to see their place in the contested college family as an important part of their journey toward womanhood. While Progressive-era students’ traditions and activities were sometimes criticized as frivolous by their contemporaries (Gordon 1990), students celebrated these experiences because of how they so often made them feel like part of the student family.

It was fitting that the Bessie Tift yearbook was called *Chiaroscuro*, referring to “the blending of light and shadows”. (Forward 1910, p. 7). Students were not of one mind in their attitudes towards religion, rules, or their places in the college family. Their published writings show that the college experience was a blend of many experiences—mischief, friendship, sisterhood, leadership, love, and spirituality—that they believed, in one way, or another were part of their journey into womanhood. They celebrated the deeds they accomplished in “the light,” in full view of faculty, administrators, and church leaders. They were convinced that their mothering of younger students and their leadership in religious organizations helped them move beyond childishness into useful women. At other times, they relished the small acts of defiance they practiced in “the shadows”. They hid their disobedience from staff, much like disobedient children trying to escape punishment. At the same time, they likely viewed their illicit activities as ways of escaping the paternalistic and highly controlling customs of their schools. Students believed that their place in the college home shaped their identity in a significant way and frequently believed that their experiences in college prepared them to live purposeful, useful lives. College women believed they were fit for this task not simply because of their classroom education but because they had already gained practice organizing and leading. Upperclassmen had already come to view themselves as motherly figures responsible for mentoring younger women. College also gave them the opportunity to preside over traditions, activities, and prayer meetings. While administrators imposed rules that at times attempted to keep students in a prolonged state of childhood, female college students found ways to reimagine their place on the college campus as more than daughters.

Funding: This research is funded by Lynn E. May, Jr., Study Grant, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, [Tennessee (2016)].

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Acknowledgments: The author would like to thank the following archivists and librarians for their valuable assistance: Sandra Baird, Timothy Bergman, Laura Botts, Haley-Marie Ellegood, Taffey Hall, Vanessa Nicholson, John Rivest, Janice Sniker, Adam Winters, Kathryn Wright, and Jacqueline Young.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Notes

- ¹ I intentionally use this term because not all of the schools examined in this article were strictly women's colleges. This article uses Tennessee College for Women, Shorter College, Judson College, and Bessie Tift college as the primary examples, but is not limited to those institutions.
- ² Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, pp. 43–44. It is important to note that the South had a weaker tradition of supporting public education. McCandless points out that during the time when most of the young women who are within the scope of this study were children, no states in the South required children to attend public schools. This meant that many southern women seeking a higher education were not well-prepared for college-level work. McCandless, *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), p. 20.
- ³ Historian Amy Thompson McCandless has identified two educational philosophies that school administrators applied to women's education in the early twentieth century. She uses the term "traditionalist" to describe the individuals who believed women should have the opportunity to receive "an education that was every bit as good as that provided for their brothers". Traditionalists placed an emphasis on the liberal arts, classics, languages, literature, as well as science and mathematics. During the Progressive era some schools adopted what McCandless terms a "utilitarian" educational model. The "utilitarian" model "had nothing against intellectual rigor or cultural enrichment," McCandless argues. Instead, the model provided an education deemed more practical for "women's peculiar life experiences". Southern Baptist colleges exemplified elements of both philosophies, making it difficult to place Southern Baptist colleges neatly in one category or the other. See McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, pp. 53–54. This complexity can be seen in schools adopting home economics, for example. For a discussion of Judson's campus building projects and their adoption of home economics courses during this time, see Walker, "If These Walls Could Speak," pp. 157–58; pp. 175–76.
- ⁴ This was achieved by the first Southern accrediting organization, the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools (1895) and later the Southern Association of College Women (1903). Amy Thompson McCandless, *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), pp. 34–36; Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 8. At the same time, many Southern students wanting to attend college had not been sufficiently prepared to meet the colleges' standards. As a result, many Southern Baptist schools had preparatory programs for such students. McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, p. 32. Lynn Gordon similarly notes that "the shortage of good secondary education meant that academic standards remained an issue in the twentieth century". Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education*, p. 48.
- ⁵ Georgetown College became fully coeducational in 1892. After briefly experimenting with coeducation in the 1890s, Howard became officially coeducational in 1914.
- ⁶ Because this article examines undergraduate institutions, the Woman's Missionary Union Training School is outside the scope of this analysis.
- ⁷ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, Chapter 1. Mary Lyon may have also modeled her seminary off of early nineteenth century asylums. These asylums attempted to bring order to their patients' lives by imposing extreme regimentation and required periods of meditation and prayer. Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, p. 14. Discipline at men's antebellum schools was extremely harsh as well. See Joseph F. Kett, *Rights of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), p. 51.
- ⁸ McCandless explains that this was a common feature of southern women's colleges. *The Past in the Present*, pp. 56–57.
- ⁹ Kett notes that beginning in the late 19th century, this insularity was due to the on-campus residential system as well as the numerous on-campus activities that, according to Kett, tended to foster dependence rather than independence and largely kept students from forming connections with the outside world. Kett explains that, for the most part, "these activities began and ended within college gates". Kett, *Rights of Passage*, p. 174. Overall, administrators' level of control "was now much greater, for authority was being extended as never before over the spare-time pursuits of students". Kett, *Rights of Passage*, p. 184.
- ¹⁰ Sophomores did not always play the role of the rival sibling, however. Sometimes, they welcomed freshmen and planned receptions for them. See, for example, Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, p. 162; Wendy Rouse, "'A Very Crushable, Kissable Girl': Queer Love and the Invention of the Abnormal Girl Among College Women in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 21 (2022): 202. doi:10.1017/S1537781422000147.
- ¹¹ The pairing of freshmen and juniors each year was by no means unique to the schools examined for this article. See, for example, McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, pp. 138–40 and Walker, *If These Walls Could Speak*, pp. 122–23, and Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, p. 159.
- ¹² Caroline Dormon, *Conversationalist* (Dormon 1907), p. 8. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL. Dormon, more than most, would have understood the profound maturing that could take place during college. She entered Judson as a "shy lonely student" whose homesickness was so debilitating that after her first year, she pleaded with her parents not to send her back. However, she was eventually accepted as a beloved member of the college family. Walker, "If These Walls Could Speak," p. 181.

- ¹³ “A Day in a ‘Non’s’ Life,” *Chiaroscuro* (*A Day in a ‘Non’s’ Life 1912*), p. 155; “Lulu’s Diary,” (*Lulu’s Diary 1912*), p. 158. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- ¹⁴ For example, (*The Conversationalist 1899*, p. 71); (*Farrior 1917*, p. 147); (*Carstarphen 1911*, pp. 210–12).
- ¹⁵ “Flashlight Club,” *Argo* (*Flashlight Club 1917*), p. 168; “Seven Cups of Chocolate Club,” *Argo* (*Seven Cups of Chocolate Club 1911*), p. 168. Shorter University Museum and Archives, Rome, Georgia.

References

- A Day in a ‘Non’s’ Life. 1912. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections.
- Alabama Baptist Convention. 1880. *Annual*. Prattville: Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.
- An Inspiring Scene. 1896. In *The Chimes 13 (July)*. Rome: Shorter University. Shorter University Museum and Archives.
- Bell, Lillian. 1901. Meditation. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: The Judson Institute. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- Bonsteel, Abbie Benton. 1925. *Hidden Pearls*. Nashville: Sunday School Board. Southern Baptist Convention.
- Boykin, Effie. 1907. Religious Department. In *Bessie Tift Journal 8 (October)*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections.
- Carstarphen, Julia. 1911. Caught in the Act. In *Bessie Tift Journal 11 (February)*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, pp. 210–12.
- Carter, Helen. 1909. Guide to Judson College. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- Chiaroscuro*. 1912. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- Crawford, Rosa G. 1907. Flashlights from a New Girl’s Experience. In *Bessie Tift Journal 8 (October)*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections.
- Cutts, Esther. 1913. Y.W.A. Department. In *Bessie Tift Journal 13 (March)*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections.
- Don’t. 1915. In *Dryad*. Murfreesboro: Tennessee College for Women. Tennessee College for Women Collection, SBHLA, Box 3, Folder 2.
- Dormon, Caroline. 1907. *Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- Dryad*. 1915. Murfreesboro: Tennessee College for Women. Tennessee College for Women Collection, SBHLA, Box 3, Folder 2.
- E.H.H. 1899. To L.S.S. In *Iris*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives, Rome, Georgia.
- Etheridge, Hattie M. 1907. Types. In *Bessie Tift Journal 8 (October)*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections.
- Eunice. 1903. A Christmas Letter. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- Farrior, Claire. 1917. Jane Plays Hostess. In *Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- Flashlight Club. 1917. In *Argo*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives.
- Forward. 1910. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections.
- Freeman, Virginius Marianus. 1908. In the Scientific World. In *Bessie Tift Journal 8 (April)*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections.
- Freshman Class. 1910. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- Freshman Feast! 1918. In *The Chimes 23 (May)*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives.
- General Association of Baptists in Kentucky. 1896. *Minutes*. Louisville: General Association of Baptists in Kentucky. Minutes of the annual meeting of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky.
- Georgetown College. 1892. *Catalogue of Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky, 1892–1893*. Georgetown: Georgetown College. Georgetown College Archives, Georgetown, Kentucky.
- Georgetown College. 1905. *Catalogue of Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky, 1905–1906*. Georgetown: Georgetown College. Georgetown College Archives, Georgetown, Kentucky.
- Georgetown College. 1914. *Catalogue of Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky, 1914–1915*. Georgetown: Georgetown College. Georgetown College Archives, Georgetown, Kentucky.
- Givens, John W.T. 1922. Vacation in Kentucky. *Western Recorder*, September 7, p. 12.
- Gordon, Lynn D. 1990. *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Grantham, Dewey. 1983. *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Harris, Grace. 1911. Y.W.C.A. In *The Chimes 27 (February)*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives, Rome, Georgia.
- His Twelfth Labor: A Prophecy. 1912. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.

- Holcomb, Carol Crawford. 2020. *Home Without Walls: Southern Baptist Women and Social Reform in the Progressive Era*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Holloway, Ethel. 1917. Judson in Summer. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College.
- Horowitz, Helen Lefkowitz. 1984. *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s*, 2nd ed. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- How to Keep Your Privileges. 1912. In *Dryad*. Murfreesboro: Tennessee College for Women. Tennessee College for Women Collection, SBHLA Box 2, Folder 6.
- January 12, 1908. 1910. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- Jest and Jollity. 1912. In *The Chimes* 28 (May). Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives.
- Judson College. 1910. In *Catalogue of Judson College, 1910–1911*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University, Birmingham, AL.
- Judson College, Marion, in Sixty-Eighth Year. 1905. *Alabama Baptist*, August 23, p. 4.
- Judson Female Institute. 1890. In *Catalogue of the Judson Female Institute, 1890–1891*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University, Birmingham, AL.
- Judson Female Institute. 1894. In *Catalogue of the Judson Female Institute, 1894–1895*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University, Birmingham, AL.
- Judson Female Institute. 1901. In *Catalogue of the Judson Female Institute, 1901–1902*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University, Birmingham, AL.
- Junior Love Song. 1912. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections.
- Kett, Joseph F. 1977. *Rights of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present*. New York: Basic Books.
- King, Georgia. 1918. Class History. In *Our Senior Book 1918*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives. Shorter University, Rome, Georgia.
- Knight, L. 1917. Pictorial Review of Class 1917. In *Argo*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives.
- L., B. 1908. Free Press. In *Acorn* 2 (December). Raleigh: Meredith College. Meredith College Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.
- Lile, Joanna. 2012. 'At Our Very Door': Families, Home Life, and Reform in the Southern Baptist Convention, 1880–1930. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, USA.
- Lulu's Diary. 1912. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- Manly, Louise. 1913. *History of Judson College*. Atlanta: Foote and Davies.
- Mathews, Donald G. 1977. *Religion in the Old South*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McCandless, Amy Thompson. 1999. *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- McDannell, Colleen. 1994. *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840–1900*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- McEntire, Fannie. 1909. The Ten Commandments. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- McMichael, Nanie Lou. 1921. The Religious Life at Bessie Tift College. *The Christian Index*, June 2, pp. 22–23.
- Morris, Mattie. 1912. The Function of the College Y.W.A. *Mission Messenger*, August 16, p. 2.
- Parker, Ruth. 1907. The Children's Page. In *Bessie Tift Journal* 8 (October). Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- Poole, Fay. 1915. To My Crush. In *Dryad*. Murfreesboro: Tennessee College for Women. Tennessee College for Women Collection, SBHLA, Box 3, Folder 2.
- Pugh, Annie Gee. 1903. Arriving. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- Rouse, Wendy. 2022. 'A Very Crushable, Kissable Girl': Queer Love and the Invention of the Abnormal Girl Among College Women in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 21: 201–20. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Scales, T. Laine. 2000. *All That Fits a Woman: Training Southern Baptist Women for Charity and Mission, 1907–1926*. Macon: Mercer University Press.
- Schweiger, Beth Barton. 2000. *The Gospel Working Up: Progress and the Pulpit in Nineteenth-Century Virginia*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Senior Class. 1918. In *The Chimes* 34 (May). Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives.
- Seven Cups of Chocolate Club. 1911. In *Argo*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives, Rome, Georgia.
- Shorter Bells. 1900. In *Iris*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives, Rome, Georgia.
- Shorter College. 1909. *Rules and Regulations for the Boarding Department*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives. Shorter University, Rome, Georgia.
- Shorter Female College. 1890. *The Chimes* 7 June. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives, Rome, Georgia.
- Sims, Ruth. 1913. Go to Study Hall. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.

- Solomon, Barbara Miller. 1985. *The Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- State of Georgia, County Monroe. 1912. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- Tennessee College for Women. 1910. *Souvenir Bulletin, Tennessee College for Women*. Murfreesboro: Tennessee College for Women. Tennessee Collection for Women Collection, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives (SBHLA), Nashville, Tennessee, Box 1, Folder 13.
- The Chimes*. 34 (May). 1918. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives.
- The Conversationalist*. 1899. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- The Family. 1912. In *Chiaroscuro*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College.
- The Proverbs of a Ne'er-Do-Well. 1912. In *Dryad*. Murfreesboro: Tennessee College for Women, p. 119. Tennessee College for Women Collection, SBHLA, Box 2, Folder 6.
- The Sheet-Anchor of the Home. 1917. *Alabama Baptist*, June 20, p. 6.
- Thomas, Mary Lee. 1909. On Being a Fresh. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- Todd, Pearl. 1911. Religious Department. In *Bessie Tift Journal 11 (January)*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- Todd, Pearl. 1910. My First Twilight Prayer-Meeting at Bessie Tift College. In *The Bessie Tift Journal 11 (November)*. Forsyth: Bessie Tift College. Tift College Records, 1880–1986, Mercer University Special Collections, Macon, Georgia.
- Valentine Reception. 1916. In *Argo*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives, Rome, Georgia.
- Walker, Gabrielle. 2023. 'If These Walls Could Speak': Judson College and the Formation of the New Baptist Woman, 1838–1930. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS, USA.
- When I was a Judson Girl. 1903. In *The Conversationalist*. Marion: Judson College. Judson College Library, Marion, Alabama. Collection now housed at Samford University archives in Birmingham, AL.
- Young Women's Christian Association. 1911. In *Argo*. Rome: Shorter College. Shorter University Museum and Archives, Rome, Georgia.
- Y.W.C.A. Department. 1910. In *Acorn 3 (February)*. Raleigh: Meredith College. Meredith College Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.