

# THE MODERN CLUB

>>> OF PHILADELPHIA

FOUNDED IN 1913, THE MODERN CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA is one of the oldest social clubs in the Delaware Valley. The Modern Club has been involved in various artistic, charitable and educational activities. The Club, in its earliest years, organized political debates, supported the war effort of World War II and assisted disadvantaged families. Newspaper articles from this era are featured on pages two and three of this brochure.

Today, the primary mission of The Modern Club is the preservation and promotion of Sweetbriar Mansion, a historic house museum in Fairmount Park. Each year The Modern Club, in cooperation with the City of Philadelphia, keeps Sweetbriar open for tours between July and December. Also, the Club makes significant contributions of time and resources to the maintenance of Sweetbriar.

**Samuel Breck** built Sweetbriar Mansion in 1797 to escape the Yellow Fever epidemic, which killed 10,000 Philadelphians between 1793 and 1800. Due to his schooling in France, Breck made Sweetbriar a gathering place of the French diplomatic corps, which included his friend **Marquis de Lafayette**. Other notables important to the Breck family at this time were **Dr. Benjamin Rush** and **Joseph Bonaparte**, brother of Napoleon.

Sweetbriar is built of local rubble-stone covered with stucco, a popular building practice in the 18th century. The style, although Federal, shows the continuing influence of Georgian Symmetry.

In 1869 Sweetbriar became part of Fairmount Park. It bordered the Centennial Exposition grounds of 1876. The Junior League restored the house in 1932. But since 1939 Sweetbriar has been maintained by the The Modern Club Of Philadelphia, Inc., which works in cooperation with the City of Philadelphia.



Sweetbriar Mansion is named for the sweetbriar rose.

The sweetbriar rose grows in a variety of colors.

One variety of sweetbriar rose is pictured at the bottom of this page.



# The Modern Club Scrapbook: 1918 - 1951

In 1928 The Modern Club started collecting items in a leather-bound scrapbook. The scrapbook contains articles, photographs and invitations dated 1918 to 1951. Scans of a few items from the scrapbook are below. Summaries of various articles are on the next page.

**SALVATION LASSIES TELL EXPERIENCES**  
 Describe Origin of "Doughnut Drive" in Talk at Modern Club  
 Praise Soldiers for Courtesy Shown Feminine Welfare Workers at Front

**Makers of Doughnuts Back from the Trenches**



After eight months in France under constant fire, Captain Viola McAllister and Lieutenant Alice McAllister, Salvation Army lassies, yesterday told members of the Modern Club, 1200 Spruce street, of some of their experiences overseas. They were members of the famous "doughnut brigade" having been with Adjutant Helen Partridge and Margaret Shelden, when the doughnut was introduced to the boys in the trenches.

Lieutenant McAllister, in speaking of doughnuts in her talk yesterday, said "All Salvation Army girls make doughnuts now. The boys like them."

right—Captain Viola McAllister and Lieutenant Alice McAllister

PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 1921

**Modern Parents Blamed for "Jazz Girl" of Today**

Mrs. Abbey S. Brown, of Ogontz School, Says "Flappers" Are Indulged Too Much in Effort to "Please Society"

It is society's demand upon young girls and the pampering of fond parents that cause the tendency among young people of today toward the loose, dissolute and extreme in manners, morals and dress.

This is the opinion of Mrs. Abbey Southland Brown, head of the Ogontz School for Girls, expressed in an appeal to parents, made today at a meeting of the Modern Club, 1618 Walnut street.

"The abnormality does not rest with the girl," said Mrs. Brown. "It is in the atmosphere that surrounds her. Society's moral code is to be a success. Popularity and ravishing success is her first blush of maidenhood—that is the standard set for the young girls.

"Society thrusts too much responsibility on the young people. When you ask a young girl to appear as the center of a social party, when parents call her in to show off her parents, it is not extraordinary that she goes to the extreme, that she attempts unusual things.

"She is old and wise at eighteen. She is going to parties when she is 15 and 16 years. Her holidays and work are periods of frenzied activity when ignorant parents in an effort to give her a good time, over-indulge her with parties.

"Parents 'Stand Off'"

Parents should like to have a school where there are no vacations, and no parents to interfere, and I think perhaps we should accomplish things with our girls. I have a hard time spelled at this kind of thing. I have a hard time spelled at this kind of thing. I have a hard time spelled at this kind of thing.



MRS. ABBEY SUTHERLAND BROWN

who is sought and not seeking, we must put the right atmosphere around her. May a girl's heart is wrong when she feels as she leaves school that the standards she learned there are not what the world wants. She has learned classical literature and the world demands less. She

**CLUB WOMEN SCORE BEAUTY PAGEANT 1927**

Called 'Throw-Back to Barbarism' in Resolution Opposing Annual Atlantic City Show

**'EXPLOITS YOUNG GIRLS'**

The Modern Club today joined its protest to that of nine other women's organizations of the city against the holding of the annual Beauty Pageant at Atlantic City.

Scoring the pageant as a throw-back to barbarism, Mrs. Hland Brooke, president of the club, urged that strenuous efforts be pursued to stop the "exploitation of young girls." The meeting was held at the Ritz-Carlton.

"Simply believe it should be abolished, do good," Mrs. Brooke said. "It is merely a negative is wholly ineffectual has proved to be beauty contests, to see that the exploited. Civil given up save Atlantic City revealing cost-ly features, back that show civilized state



**The Modern Club Opens New Home**

Ten Lectures by H. V. Kaltenborn Are Highlights of Year's Program

The Modern Club of Philadelphia, an organization whose 125 members met last night at 67 from the Main Line, held its first meeting of the year at Sweetbriar Mansion in Fairmount Park on Friday, November 10, at 10:45 A. M., when the program of the meeting will be followed by a showing of a color film recently purchased for the benefit of one of the club's welfare projects.

Since its organization in 1913, the club will have its permanent headquarters at Sweetbriar Mansion which it now occupies.

The coming year include a series of lectures November 24 by Mrs. C. C. Kaltenborn, portrait painter;

1939



THE MODERN CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA  
 THE BARCLAY  
 RITTENHOUSE SQUARE—EAST

**SPECIAL MEETING**  
 MONDAY MORNING, APRIL 17TH, 11 O'CLOCK

TO DISCUSS THE ADVISABILITY OF MOVING THE MODERN CLUB TO SWEETBRIAR MANSION, FAIRMOUNT PARK

**IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT ALL MEMBERS ATTEND THIS MEETING**

# Summaries Of Articles From Scrapbook

A few newspaper articles from the scrapbook are summarized below. The opinions below are not necessarily the opinions of members of The Modern Club today.

## *Salvation Lassies Tell Experiences*

February 1, 1919

At a meeting of The Modern Club, **Captain Viola McAlister** and **Lieutenant Alice McAlister** from the Salvation Army discussed their experiences in France during World War I. These two sisters endured eight months “under constant fire.” They were members of the famous “doughnut brigade,” which provided doughnuts to soldiers. Doughnuts were made as a substitute for food items that weren’t delivered because supply wagons had been delayed.

## *Modern Parents Blamed for ‘Jazz Girl’ of Today*

Friday, April 8, 1921

**Mrs. Abbey Sutherland Brown**, head of the Ogontz School for Girls, discussed young women known as “flappers.” Parents, Mrs. Sutherland said, are too demanding – and too pampering – and this pushes women toward too loud and showy morals and dress. In particular, Mrs. Sutherland says that parents put too much pressure on their teen girls when they expect their girls to be the center of attention at holiday social events. Mrs. Sutherland spoke at a Modern Club meeting at The Acorn Club at 1618 Walnut Street.

## *Debated By Women*

1922

At the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, The Modern Club staged a hard-fought debate between Republicans and Democrats. Speakers debated a variety of topics, including tariffs, The League of Nations and centralization of government. **Miss Margaret T. Maguire**, principal of the McCall School, wore an inexpensive German-made dress to raise a point of debate: Would women want to wear nice clothes bought at the expense of the American seamstress who would lose protection of the Republican tariff?

## *Club Women Score Beauty Pageant* 1927

“Mrs. Bland Brooke,” President of The Modern Club, said “the Atlantic City Beauty Pageant, with its revealing costumes and other objectionable features, is nothing but a throwback that should not be tolerated in a civilized state of society.” Members of The Modern Club signed a resolution urging the Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce to end the pageant. Other women’s groups in the city signed the same resolution. **Note:** The journalists apparently are wrong when they refer to the Club President as “Mrs. Bland Brooke.” Other articles in the scrapbook refer to her always as “**Mrs. P. Brooke Bland.**” Did the journalists purposely get it wrong? Were they being mischievous calling her “Bland” Brooke because she was so uptight and against the beauty pageant? We may never know.



**Mrs. P. Brooke Bland**  
Club President  
1926 - 1928

## *The Modern Club Has During The Past Winter Through The Visiting Nurse Society*

1931 – 32 (Flyer)

*Provided* special nurses, convalescent care, coal, food, warm clothing and rent for desperately ill patients. *New shoes and galoshes* purchased for 9 children. *A ton of coal* sent to one family. *Christmas baskets* of food sent to 45 families. Plus more charitable giving.

## *The Modern Club Opens New Home*

November, 1939

The Modern Club held its first meeting of the season on November 10, 1939 at Sweetbriar Mansion. The Club decided to establish its permanent headquarters at Sweetbriar, which The Junior League previously had administered. Plans for the year included lectures on portrait painting, reviews and other news.

## *‘Nells’ Here Organize Women’s Fleet Auxiliary*

Wednesday, January 21, 1942

Sweetbriar Mansion was used to hold classes for the “Nells,” an organization of women who assisted the Navy during World War II. The Modern Club joined the Nells as a unit.

# THE MODERN CLUB

## >>> RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In recent years The Modern Club has:

Supervised extensive renovations to Sweetbriar Mansion between 2003 and 2010, including new plumbing, painting and other repairs. The Modern Club shared the expense with the City of Philadelphia;

Ensured that Sweetbriar stays open for tours between July 1st and December 15th. Tours are affordable at only \$3.00 per person;

Participated in Christmas Tours 2009 in cooperation with the City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum Of Art and six other historic sites. The Modern Club paid for all decorations for Sweetbriar. The Garden Club Of Bala Cynwyd designed and placed the decorations. The tours were a big success with thousands of people visiting Sweetbriar and the other historic sites;

Participated in Open House Tours 2008 in cooperation with Fairmount Park Council for Historic Sites, Friends of Independence National Historical Park and eight other historic sites. The tours were a success with many tourists visiting the sites;

Established an online presence for Sweetbriar at [sweetbriarmansion.org](http://sweetbriarmansion.org). Important information such as events, history, directions and even diary entries of Samuel Breck are available for the world to see.

In addition to the above, The Modern Club has sponsored specific programs, including NSDAR, viewing of the documentary "Revolutionary River," Rochambeau Trail Committee, a Shakespeare presentation and an art exhibit in cooperation with the Moore Art Institute.

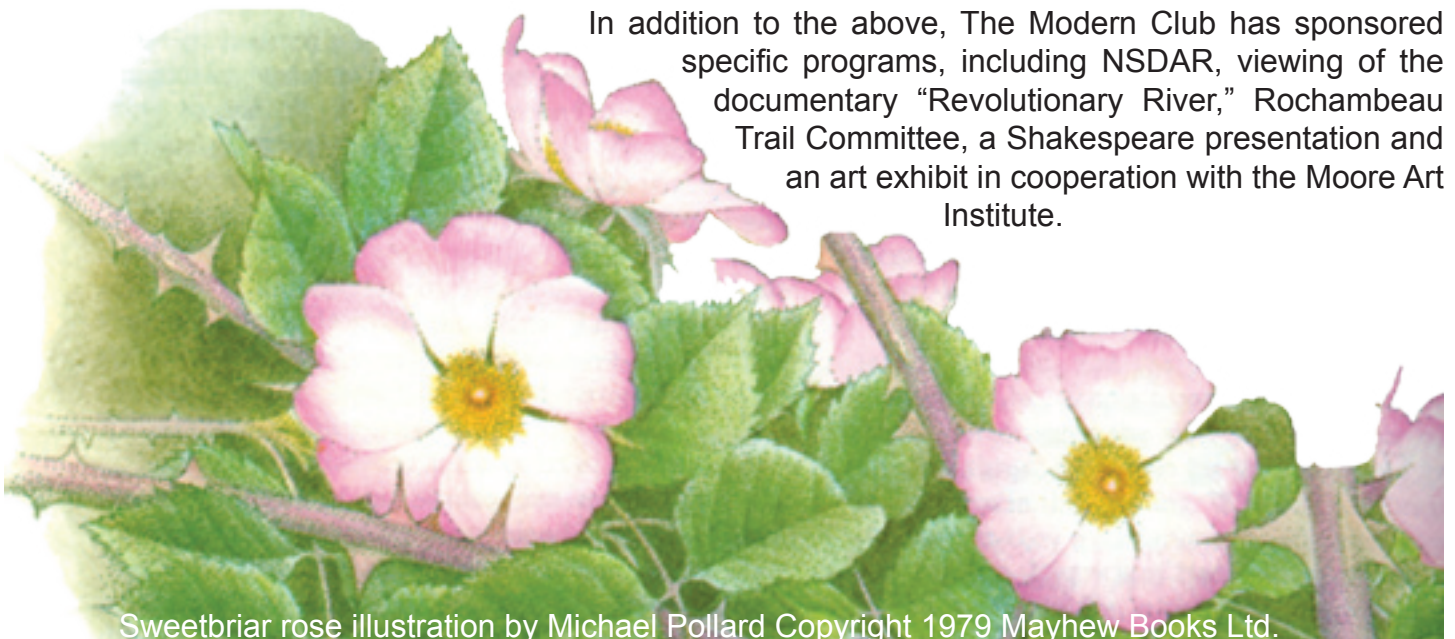


**Donations** to support the educational and historic mission of Sweetbriar can be sent to:

The Modern Club of Philadelphia  
c/o Sweetbriar Mansion  
Fairmount Park West  
1 Sweetbriar Drive  
Philadelphia, PA 19131-3792

**Contact us** to arrange a tour:

215.222.1333  
[info@sweetbriarmansion.org](mailto:info@sweetbriarmansion.org)



Sweetbriar rose illustration by Michael Pollard Copyright 1979 Mayhew Books Ltd.

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