

A History of Barnard College; Frederick A.P Barnard and the afterlives of slavery

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Barnard College in the city of New York is known today as a beacon of intellectual feminist thought and action. The college's history is often portrayed as a radical tradition of feminism, one that is and has been open to all women regardless of race or creed. Barnard however, in its history and contemporary status, is predicated upon its relationship with the man and institution that bore it, Frederick A.P Barnard of Columbia University. Founded in 1889 by the trustees of the college as the final compromise to the University's refusal to admit women, Barnard College is among the oldest Women's institutions, both in New York and throughout the nation. For many, coeducation stood as an imminent threat to the purity and successes of the university. The original administration that founded King's College, which would become Columbia University, in 1754 was very clear about the type of student they were looking to attract into their rapidly expanding university. With hopes of making Columbia one of the world's most influential institutions of higher learning, the founders of the college sought out the nation's wealthiest citizens, and, in the spirit of white supremacy and American colonialism, they maintained a strict exclusion of all individuals who were not heterosexual white men.

This policy of exclusion was not at all unfamiliar to most of the United States' oldest and most prestigious institutions. Rather than mandating who could be admitted into the College, the founders and later heads of the University made it explicit who would not be allowed entrance. Racial and gender exclusion is an antiquated American tradition that has always simultaneously targeted and forgotten women, Black people, and people of other marginalized identities. For those who live within the intersections of these identities, existence is challenged or rejected at almost every corner and nowhere is this more evident than within the confines of Columbia and its decision to create Barnard College as a separate women's institution. These exclusions within the University space reflected the same exclusions that were being maintained throughout the whole of American society and were derived from the institution of racialized slavery that was introduced in the nation.

From its inception, Columbia University was deeply tied to the system of American chattel slavery. Faculty and students owned slaves, buildings were erected using the donations from slaveholding families and deliberate choices were made to privilege European thought and authority in Columbia's education. The eradication of slavery and the freedom for enslaved Black people did not put an end to the exclusionary practices of the university which remained closed to women and black people decades after emancipation. Moreover, though it seemed like progress towards a more open and equal Columbia was being made with the removal of this system, white supremacist practices dominated and continued to shape the university through its many forms of expansion. With the recent research conducted revealing the University's ties to slavery, many Barnard students hold the sentiment that their college is somehow removed from this history. The purpose of this paper is to inform its reader with an accurate understanding of the motivations behind coeducation at Columbia and the subsequent creation of Barnard College as a compromise to this effort.

In order to critically examine coeducation and the events leading up to the founding of Barnard college as a women's only school, this essay will consist of three parts. The first and main portion of this research will exhibit the life and legacy of Frederick A.P Barnard as the main actor and force in the movement towards coeducation and the

founding of Barnard. In doing so, this research will expand to discuss how and to what extent Barnard's experiences as an educator, a slave owner, and political figure within academia shaped Barnard College and its brand of feminism. The second section will discuss the experiences and work of Annie Nathan Meyer, the feminist behind the movement towards a school for women at Columbia. By examining Meyer's interactions with Columbia, I indicate when and to whom the movement towards coeducation and the education of women became available, who received the credit for these advances and why. The third and final section will briefly examine some of the experiences of Barnard's first Black female graduate, Zora Neale Hurston and the earlier decades of Barnard more generally. In exploring Hurston's time juxtaposed to the experiences and legacies of Frederick Barnard and Annie Nathan Meyer, this final section will demonstrate that the strides towards women's education at Columbia/Barnard failed to support and make space for women of color.

Together, these sections critically analyze the extent to which Barnard's current mode of feminism has been shaped by Frederick Barnard the history of slavery racism and exclusion at Columbia. I argue that coeducation was used as a political tool to expand the university while maintaining the same anti-black sentiments of the antebellum era. Finally, this paper challenges the narrative of Barnard College as a "diverse" women's institution by interrogating the university's insistence on coeducation alongside a continued reluctance to admit black students. This pattern shows that the feminism espoused at Barnard inherently rejected the existence of Black women and intersectional feminism altogether.

A Brief Background on the Struggle for Equal Education:

Near the middle of the nineteenth century, a women's movement that began in upstate New York, emboldened by the egalitarian rhetoric present during the antebellum era steadily made its way into New York City. Women began to see the prospects awaiting them in the rapidly growing metropolis and the emergence of new immigrants led many women to believe that the city would be more open to their demands. The movement was largely led by activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony who had

moved to New York City and together founded the Working Women's Association to support female wage earners[1]. The women campaigned for financial independence and equality of law for women independent from their husbands and believed that society needed to provide them with opportunities for higher education. Slowly, women were coming into more and more contact with opportunities for independent financial success and eventually took large roles generating in the economic boom that hit the city just over half way through the century.

In 1837, Oberlin College became the nation's first institute of higher education to open its doors to women both white and black. The College aspired to create an interracial and coeducational Christian student body striving to create a more just society, but the college still upheld normative gender roles. Eventually, the successes in coeducation at Oberlin College motivated other state schools in the Midwest region to begin admitting women, like the University of Iowa in 1855[2]. The Morrill Land Grant Act signed by President Lincoln in 1862 furthered the movement towards coeducation by making public land accessible to state colleges looking to expand, with new opportunities to grow, schools needed to seek out more ways to fill their expanding classrooms. Coeducation was the perfect solution.

After gaining momentum in different regions of the nation, the movement towards women's education in New York became one of the highest demands among suffragists and "As New York's leading institution of higher learning, Columbia came under early, heavy, and persistent fire" [3] on the issue. This is all to say, that the work towards women's equality both in and out of the classroom should be viewed as an effort truly fought by and for women. Although this paper argues that the founding of Barnard college was made only as a compromise to coeducation, it should be understood that the successes of Barnard and coeducation at Columbia were also result of the tireless efforts and long history of women around the country advocating for their rights. Coeducation may have been used as a political tool of the University, but that does not erase the long records of actions taken by women in New York for decades predating Barnard's existence. The strides women made on their own for higher education only made the jobs of the men in charge easier. Moving forward then, we may think about

how this history has been overlooked or disconnected from the narratives of the coeducation at Columbia.

Section One: The Life and Legacy of Frederick A.P Barnard

Early Life and Education in the North

Lillie Devereux Blake, a distinguished women's rights advocate and descendent of two Columbia University presidents, began the conversation on women's education at Columbia in 1873 and luckily "won a sympathetic response from Columbia's progressive president, Frederick A. P. Barnard"[4]. Barnard would become known as a key actor in establishing Barnard College and leading the movement towards coeducation throughout the University.

Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard was born on 5th 1809 in Sheffield Massachusetts. Barnard was the descendent of English immigrants who arrived in Massachusetts in as early as 1628. By the age of six, Barnard was well versed in the works of William Shakespeare and Addison, and he maintained a particular interest in math and sciences for the majority of his life. When just ten years old, Barnard moved with his grandfather, who was the Secretary of War under President John Quincy Adams, to Saratoga Springs where he continued his education and began learning difference trades, "At his leisure, he learned the art of printing so effectually that he might have supported himself by it had circumstances compelled him"[5].

A short look into Frederick Barnard's early life already reveals the massive privileges afforded to him from his youth that were entirely based upon his family's ability and wealth, and his existence as a white man. At just thirteen years old, Barnard had already experienced and gained access to what the white and black women around him could not even conceive. From Saratoga Springs, Frederick made his way to Connecticut and where he entered Yale College at the tender age of 14. It was while studying at Yale that Barnard's first exposures into coeducation occurred. His favorite chemistry professor named, Benjamin Silliman, would often invite female auditors to sit

in on specific lectures[6]. Up until this point Barnard like most educated young men, had never been in the classroom with women. This experience would become a lasting memory for Barnard who would later take up coeducation in his own teaching. Barnard graduated from Yale in 1824 with honors. Soon after he went on to teach at the Hartford Grammar School for Boys in Mathematics. There, Barnard was introduced to Catherine Beecher who was the headmistress at a nearby female seminary,

Barnard soon became a regular at Beecher's weekly soirées, where he came to know some of the foremost female writers of the day, including Lydia Segourney, Harriet Beecher, and Sara Willis (Fanny Fern), women who would, in a few years, inspire young Lillie Devereux Blake to become an author[7]

Barnard's relationship with coeducation began long before his time at Columbia. Barnard had personal experiences with coeducation and formed intimate relationships with many female intellectuals. These early experiences may have played a large role in shaping Barnard's interest and confidence towards coeducation. After some experience in Hartford, Barnard began to lose his hearing and decided to take his work to the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb.[8] After more than five years at the Asylum, Barnard accepted an offer to move to the South.

Barnard's Move to the South

In 1838, the president of the University of Alabama set out on a mission to restore order upon the unruly college students who were growing armed and dangerous. The president invited Frederick Barnard to join the university as a Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and Barnard made the decision to leave the north and move to the South. Once at the university Barnard soon opened his classes to young women from the community hoping to influence the young college men to better themselves using chivalry. This is the first instance in which Barnard used coeducation as a tool to improve men's behavior rather than for women's rights. Barnard was well liked by students who described him as having "never been idle, and seldom out of a place of prominent usefulness." He was highly contentious among other faculty members

because “Barnard published extensively on the need for practical, as opposed to a classical, curriculum, which brought him into conflict with the editor of the Mobile Register (local newspaper), as well as the university’s administration”[9]. On July 4th 1851, he gave a pro-union speech in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he attempted to quiet southern anxieties towards the north and also pushed citizens to use education as a means for economic mobility.

Still, while in Alabama, Barnard began using a slave named Sam as a research assistant in his labs. Barnard is said to have owned multiple people during his time in Alabama though little is actually known about these individuals. The president of the University of Alabama at the time, Basil Manly, who was not fond of Barnard’s northern style, recalled once that one of Barnard’s slaves acted “as a pimp to get out Barnard’s Women, including the younger Luna, whom they use in great numbers, nightly” [10]. This instance not only depicts Barnard as a slave owner but also as someone who abused and manipulated enslaved black females for their sexuality. Thinking about Frederick Barnard in the context of Barnard college as a women’s institution, raises questions about how the personal history of Barnard and instances like those described above may have shaped the erasure and exclusionary practices that left Black women out of the picture at Columbia until decades after the founding of Barnard College.

After some time serving as a professor, Frederick was asked to join as a professor then Chancellor of the University of Mississippi. Mississippi at the time was one of the largest slave holding states in the nation. Much like his experience in Alabama, Frederick Barnard’s reputation while serving as Chancellor in Mississippi was also agitated by his northern upbringing and beliefs on education. While at Ole’ Miss, the Chancellor sought to build an observatory and progress the sciences, a move that troubled many of the southern professors who were not so open to changing the curriculum. In this way, Barnard appeared to be soft on the institution of slavery because his desire to progress the university into a research institute challenged the old ways of the university that grew alongside slavery.

Trouble over Barnard’s stance on slavery worsened when on May 11th 1859, two Mississippi students named Samuel Humphreys and J.P Furnis, broke into the

Chancellor's home while he was away and proceeded to beat and sexually assault one of Barnard's female slaves named Jane. A neighboring Professor by the name of E.C Boynton overheard an argument next door and when he went to check on the noise saw the two young students in Barnard's home. Jane was one of two slaves housed that evening in Barnard's home, the slaves were known to have been ages 30 and 35. When Barnard returned to the university on May 17th 1859, his wife informed him of the assault that took place and the harm done to Jane. Surprisingly and unlike most slave owners at the time, Frederick Barnard sought to have both students expelled from the university. It was Humphreys who Jane identified as her assaulter, and he was subsequently charged by the Chancellor with,

1st. Visiting the dwelling of the President in his absence, and while it was occupied by defenceless female servants, with shameful designs upon one of the said servants; 2d. Committing a violent assault and battery upon the servant aforesaid, and inflicting severe personal injury, whereby the said servant was for some days incapacitated for labor, and of which the marks are still, after the lapse of many days, plainly visible[11]

What is so striking about Frederick Barnard's character is his ambiguous attitude towards the institution of slavery. As a man born in the North, Barnard was raised to view slavery as an immoral institution. Still, he showed no qualms using the aids of slaves in his research or his everyday life while living in the South. Both in Alabama and in Mississippi, Barnard was portrayed to be too lenient, impulsive and soft on the issue of slavery. On multiple occasions Barnard announced his loyalties and belief in the union and took this further into his educational philosophy both as a professor and chancellor. This terrified the trustees and administration of Ole Miss, who still relied deeply on slavery for funding but also as the culture of the south and institution altogether. On one hand, Frederick Barnard's insistence on removing Humphreys from the university after he attacked Jane was almost unheard of in the deep south. On the other hand, however, the language of the charges is important in determining the motivations behind Barnard's insistence. The charges refer to the assault as being "shameful" and attacking a "defenseless servant", which conveys the injustice done in

harming Jane. However, the charges also make comment on Jane's' inability to perform "labor" because of this attack and also begin by charging the student for entering the president's home while he was away. It is unclear exactly why Barnard chose to remove the student from the university. Was Barnard outraged that these young men would harm another human being in his dwelling , or was he simply upset that their stupidity would cost him the working labor of his slave? Was Frederick upset that Jane had been violated and disrespected, or was it Barnard himself who felt that his property, both his home and his slave were being threatened? The focus on Jane's "incapacitation for labor" is a fair indication that at least part of the reason Barnard decided to seek retributive justice was to rectify the situation after having lost valuable labor.

Furthermore, the committee's remarks stating, "the marks are still, after the lapse of many days, plainly visible" on Jane demonstrates a jarring reality of southern slavery. That Frederick Barnard and the university members alike were only able to identify the violence of slavery through an instance of physical abuse like this, indicates the extent to which racialized slavery and white supremacy was ingrained in American society. Barnard and other faculty members had no problem buying and owning slaves. Even if they were not the ones who committed acts of violent aggression, they maintained the violence of slavery when they did not directly witness and respond to the damage it caused.

The university voted against Barnard (3-5) in favor of Humphreys and the student was not asked to leave the school[12]. Barnard took the matter into his own hands then, and contacted the parents of Humphreys to remove him officially from the University. This disturbed a local Mississippian physician and university affiliate, Henry R. Branham, who took Barnard's continual aggression on the issue even after the verdict to indicate that he (Barnard)was "unsound on the issue of slavery"[13] Again, this was not the first situation in which Frederick Barnard, a slave owner, was accused of being soft on the issue of slavery, Barnard had been questioned about his views on the matter a number of times, both in Alabama and Mississippi. That his participation as a slaveholder was not enough to demonstrate his loyalties to the south conveys the multidimensionality of slavery at this point. This time however, Barnard sought to lay these fears to rest for

good. In March of the same year, Frederick Barnard asked the university to hold a trial to settle Branham's accusation which included the follow,

1st. That Dr. Barnard offered the statement of a negro as evidence against a student of the University of Mississippi....2nd. That after the Faculty refused to sustain the charge upon the testimony adduced, Dr. Barnard without the authority of the Faculty, wrote to his guardian a letter which resulted in the withdrawal of Mr. H[umphrey] from the University.3rd. That Dr. Barnard interposed and objected to Mr. Humphreys re-admission into the University at the opening of the following session, and thus prevented his return[14]

Here, we are once again confronted with Barnard's very strange relationship to slavery. What still remains unclear, is how Barnard understood the politics of slavery and whether or not his understanding conflicted with the ethics of slavery at the time at the university and state as a whole. On one hand, it seems Barnard was confident in his sentiments toward slavery and wants to make it apparent to the university that he maintains his loyalties to the south by asking the university himself to host a trial to debunk these charges. At the same time, the charges against Barnard are telling and should cause us to question his proximity to the peculiar institution. Later remarks on the events of this trial state that the majority of the focus was on "the extent to which owners should believe their slaves." In debating this question, Jacob Thompson supported Barnard when he said,

Your fault is that you received information, from your servant girl, which implicated a student, and you acted on that information to reach the truth; and this is set down as showing your free-soil proclivities. If this be so, I am the worst free soiler in the State: I am a downright abolitionist. No man strikes my negro that I do not hear his story. I will listen to my negro's grievances. Before God and man I believe this to be my duty. No man has a right to touch him or her without my consent, and he who would not do the same would be despised by every man in Oxford[15]

Barnard's defense to his slave unsettled the faculty because it shed light on Barnard's "free soiler proclivities", meaning anti-slavery tendencies. It was not enough for Barnard

to own and buy slaves, it was immediately noticed that Barnard did not hold the same fervor for slavery as the southerners of the university. Thompson supported Barnard only because he believed it was Barnard's duty as the owner of Jane to "listen to (her) grievances" in protection and care of his property. Thompson helps to argue that Barnard is actually protecting the institution of slavery by doing everything in his power to ensure that aside from himself, "no man has the right to touch him or her without my consent. Thompson uses possessive words on behalf of Barnard, "no man strikes *my* negro". In both of these cases Thompson and Barnard alike claim the slave as property and argue that a slaveholder must interject when another is attempting to harm their property and impede their slaves labor. That slaves were seen as property and not people was integral to slavery and by restructuring the conversation to situate *Jane*, as damaged property similar to a vandalized car or home, Barnard was able to reinstate the board's faith in his position on slavery successfully. Following this statement by Thompson, Barnard added,

I was born at the North. That I cannot help. I was not consulted in the matter. I am a slaveholder ,and, if I know myself, I am 'sound on the slavery question...As to my sentiments on the subject of slavery, my record is clear for my whole life.[16]

After successfully reoriented the discussion to position Jane as property damaged by Humphrey's irresponsible and unjust acts, Barnard further solidified himself by publicly announcing his loyalties to the south and slavery. Frederick Barnard claimed to be sound on the issue of slavery, meaning he was in support of the violent exclusionary practices that barred Black people from freedom and entrance into most public and private spaces. Not only was he a slave holder, Barnard made his best effort to portray himself as a loyalist to white Southern principles and maintained that racial hierarchies existed. Whether or not Frederick Barnard actually stood in full support of slavery is difficult to determine but one could argue that Barnard's active participation in south as a slave owner and his protection of Jane as his property, reveals that he certainly did not disagree with it enough to reject or truly grapple with the institution. Rather, Barnard positioned himself on the stronger side of this debate depending on the audience and time. Barnard gave orations supporting the union and in the same year proclaimed his

loyalties to the south. Overall, his specific stances on slavery were always troubling to determine, but it is clear that Barnard never removed himself entirely from the issue and certainly benefitted from his outright support of slavery throughout his career.

Barnard Moves Back North

Soon after his reputation at Ole' Miss was restored, Barnard began to notice the tensions between the north and south were rapidly growing. On January 21st, 1863 during the Civil War, Barnard addressed a letter to President Abraham Lincoln entitled, *A Letter to the President by A Refugee*[17]. In it, Barnard denounced slavery as a moral evil and claimed that the vast majority of southerners stood with the union. He writes that a war would end in the destruction of the south and firmly states his loyalties to the Union. This was a very different stance on slavery than the one he portrayed during the university trial just three years prior. The letter to the president was very well received by unionists and within months Barnard resigned as Chancellor to the University of Mississippi and applied for a northern visa.

In 1864, Barnard was reviewed and extended an offer from Columbia University to become the university's 10th President, Barnard accepted gladly and made his way back to New York. According to *Stand Columbia*, between 1800 and 1850, "while New York City's population doubled every twelve years, Columbia College enrollments experienced no overall growth"[18]. The reasons for this lack of growth demonstrate the colleges failure to diversify, its continual privileging of only the most elite and wealthy individuals, and the college's failure to admit Black people and women. By striving to create a purely Anglo-American institution, the exclusionary practices of race, class, gender and religion that Columbia followed ultimately led to a jarring decline of admissions and posed a real threat to the future of the university.

Once at the university and wanting to solidify his position in academia, Frederick Barnard began proposing coeducation as a means to increase student enrollment and diversify the school. Barnard was met with immediate opposition from one trustee in particular, John W. Burgess, "Whereas Barnard reveled in the growth of his university,

Burgess was of the view that universities for the benefit of the greatest number were “not universities at all”[19]. Unlike Barnard, Burgess was rigid on his view of education and specifically the education at Columbia University. Burgess was a well documented white supremacist who believed academia could not flourish as, “the presence of women among them, as peers or students, threatened to undercut claims to parity with the learned professions and with the equally all-male upper reaches of business and political life.”[20] Both Barnard and Burgess were unapologetically “university men” who sought to solidify careers in academia. Though two men may seemingly hold opposite positions on the issue, it is important to note that Barnard and Burgess were not very different in their ideology. Their difference rested on the fact that Frederick Barnard, as he did in the past, made calculated decisions within the University space in order to best support and advance his career as an educator. If coeducation would increase student enrollment and enhance the reputation of the university then, Frederick Barnard would stand behind it. Burgess disagreed, though he devoted his life to Columbia, he was unwilling to change any of the original admissions processes, fearing that admitting women would lead to the eventual admittance of Jews and African Americans[21].

In his 1879 Annual university report, Barnard made his first formal address on the prospects of coeducation[22]. This proposal was rejected by the trustees who noted that a senior student named Nicholas Murray Butler submitted an official statement on behalf of the senior class claiming coeducation would be undesirable on both educational and moral grounds and would destroy the future of the institution. Barnard did not quit, and he would spend the remainder of his time as President pushing for the university to admit women. One *Columbia Spectator* article from 1967 noted that Barnard pleaded for “a truly Catholic admissions policy including more Jews and ex-slaves”[23].

Barnard’s early experiences and his strategic political workings within the University system, show that he was an individual who sincerely believed in coeducation as a useful and progressive step for the university. Still, his belief that the university would benefit from admitting women and other identities into the university does not mean that Barnard would have supported these students throughout their academic careers. It

was one thing for Barnard to stand in favor of the education of women, but would Barnard challenge the racism and discrimination that would also enter the university with the admission of women and others? Barnard's decision was as pragmatic as it was progressive. Just as Frederick has used coeducation in Alabama to civilize unruly young men, at Columbia, Barnard saw once again opportunities awaiting him in coeducating the University. In both of these instances, coeducation was not actually focused on women, but the ways in which opening education to women, could advance the university and the successes of men within it like Barnard.

Annie Nathan Meyer and the Compromises on Coeducation:

After the initial rejection of Frederick Barnard's 1879 Annual report advocating for coeducation to the trustees of the university, Barnard drafted another report on the issue in the fall of 1883. In the report Barnard writes,

"Columbia College is destined in the coming centuries to become as comprehensive in the scope of her teaching as to be able to furnish to inquirers after truth the instruction they may desire in whatever branch of human knowledge . . . without distinction either of class or sex".[24]

Burgess and supporters including committee chair Morgan Dix unanimously voted against the proposition to coeducate once again. By this point however, Columbia had generated significant city-wide attention on the issue and competing schools in the city like NYU, remained a constant threat to the university's admissions pool. The trustees understood a compromise on coeducation needed to be made, one that maintained the purity of the College but also solved the issue of expansion.

In July of 1883, Columbia trustees introduced the Columbia College Course for women, one the first measures towards the collegiate education of women at the university. The course would allow women to enroll in separate classes taught at the University but would not cover the same material or be led by the same instructors, "During its six years of existence, the Collegiate Course enrolled a total of ninety-nine women, ...In all, four women completed the program and received Columbia degrees"[25]. The Course

failed to successfully educate women at Columbia to the standards of the university. The first woman to enroll and graduate successfully from the program was Annie Nathan Meyer of Brooklyn, New York. Meyer was one of the very few women to graduate from the program. She was born on February 19th, 1867 in New York City and was one of four children to an impoverished Sephardic Jewish family that had lost much of their wealth after the 1873 economic crash[26]. Meyer spent the majority of her life in New York and only had six years of formal schooling before leaving and continuing her education on her own. "By 1885, she had organized a reading circle modeled after Margaret Fuller's conversations,"[27] and months afterwards she enrolled in Columbia's course for women.

Annie Nathan Meyer excelled as an intellectual, she was an avid reader and writer but still noted in her entrance exams to the course that, "certain of the questions evidently referred to the Professor's lectures, which I had not had the privilege of hearing."[28] Meyer dropped the course and in 1887, she married a Columbia alum Alfred Meyer. Meyer would use her husband's resources as an alum to study in the Columbia University library. It was there that Meyers would meet Columbia's head librarian, Melvil Dewey, and begin planning out the makings of Barnard College as a separate women's institution of Columbia. Meyers took her plans to the public in January of 1888 when she published an article in *The Nation* where she criticized education at Columbia and the whole of New York for the inability to provide women with a rigorous education. Meyer eloquently argued that instead, a separate liberal arts college for women should be established in the city. This was a part of a three step plan to secure Barnard College, Meyer focused on, "a) calling on individual Columbia trustees to gain their support; b) persuading influential New Yorkers to give money and serve as trustees; c) writing and spreading publicity about the new college."[29] Meyer had solicited the help of Frederick A. P Barnard and the chairman of the board trustees, Arthur Brooks for support. She also sought the help of Ella Weed, a prominent New York City headmaster at the Anne Brown School, "Weed's contacts at the Anne Brown School were socially prominent, and she was able to get the signatures of significant New Yorkers on a petition to Columbia University trustees"[30]. In 1889 Barnard College was founded by the trustees of Columbia University as the last compromise towards the

education of women at Columbia until coeducation was finally introduced to the entire university in 1983. The college was named after Frederick Barnard who died just months before the college opened. Barnard maintained his disagreements with creating a separate women's college instead of coeducation throughout his career.

While Meyer is credited as being an influential contributor to the founding of Barnard College, multiple accounts of the history of Barnard often overlook Meyer's tireless efforts towards creating a rigorous women's institution in New York. Meyer served as a trustee of Barnard College from its founding until her death in July of 1950. She had been an active member in women's rights, worked closely with the NAACP on African American and Jewish relations and even allocated funds to assist Zora Neale Hurston, Barnard College's first black graduate, in paying for her education. Still,

Barnard (college) did not acknowledge Meyer as founder, or admit the centrality of her role, because she did not symbolize its mission or vision. She was not herself a college graduate, and her views on women's issues were, by the early twentieth century, anachronistic... she belonged to the generation of other Seven Sisters' founders-philanthropists Matthew Vassar, Sophia Smith, and Henry Fowle Durant (Wellesley). But by the time Barnard opened in 1889, twenty-four years after Vassar, a new generation of women academics and administrators had established their primacy in women's higher education[31]

It is interesting to juxtapose the treatment and memory of Frederick Barnard against that of Annie Nathan Meyer. Frederick Barnard, who disapproved of the creation of a women's college at the university after failing to introduce coeducation, became the namesake of the school. Barnard's legacy and reputation at Columbia depict him as the primary contributor to the founding of the college. Meyer on the other hand, carefully devised a plan and garnered support from influential New Yorker to help establish Barnard College in very little time. This discrepancy points to the influence of the trustees at Columbia overshadowing the influence and needs of women striving for higher education and equal rights. By detracting from Annie Nathan Meyer's historic efforts and contributions to the university and portraying Frederick Barnard as the champion of the women's college, Columbia and Barnard perpetuate exclusions of

women by redacting selected parts of history under the guise of a liberal arts women's school.

Another issue, Meyer identified as Jewish" an undesirable trait for Barnard's "founder." [32] The trustees did not want a "Jewish sounding" name for their new school and aimed to continue the trend of Protestant Americans standing as the face of all extensions of the university. That Meyer's Jewish ethnicity was a major factor in the lack of credit she received from Barnard is another indication that the University's preserved many of its racial discriminations and exclusionary practices despite progressing to offer higher education for women.

Barnard College's brand of feminism was initially led by the men of the Columbia board of trustees. Feminism as a socio-political theory and practice advocates for women's rights on the foundation of equality of the sexes. The histories and portrayals of Barnard that leave Meyer's work forgotten provide a very unequal understanding and respect for these two figures in Barnard's history. They portray Frederick Barnard as a daring man who was in the right city at the right time but was unsuccessful in generating support for his ideas; whereas, Annie Nathan Meyer used her skills and contacts to do the real work of establishing Barnard as a women's college. By privileging the "support" of Frederick Barnard and painting this as a story led by the University, a historically white supremacy and sexist institution, Barnard establishes itself firstly as a school of Columbia, and secondly as a separate feminist institution for women. Barnard College was made in compromise to coeducation. The patterns of discrimination of the original college were not yet shaken from the campus as a whole and subsequently, despite the admission of women into a separated section of the university, Barnard's history would not venture far from its predecessor.

Barnard's Beginning Days: The Upkeep of exclusion

After Barnard College was founded in 1889, the school quickly gained prominence as a leading institution of higher education because of its relationship to Columbia University. Many of the first graduates of Barnard resembled the first students of King's College:

Protestant, young, wealthy, and white. The College maintained the same homogenous student body for nearly four decades before Barnard College and its founders came face to face with the college's imminent "Jewish Problem". Dean Virginia Gildersleeve, a fairly conservative supporter of women's rights believed that "as you know, the intense ambition of the Jews for education has brought to college girls from a lower social level than that of most of the non-Jewish students"[33]. Gildersleeve was a soldier of the university, she attended Barnard herself and then went on to graduate school at Columbia. She sought to raise Barnard to become among the elite in the same ways Columbia did, through practices of careful selection and exclusion. By the 1920s, anti-Semitism was running rampant both in and outside of the university confines. Barnard created an intellectual test for applicants in order to weed out Jewish students[34], and Gildersleeve remained open about Barnard's regional and state quotas but less about the Jewish quotas the school was also keeping. Thus, Barnard upheld serious anti-Semitism and Jewish exclusion in the decades after its founding. Again, there was a parallel system of treatment of marginalized and non-white identities spanning both campuses.

Zora Neale Hurston; Black at Barnard

Barnard made its most radical move towards a more intersectional version of feminism when in 1925, the college admitted its first black student, Zora Neale Hurston, as a transfer student from Howard University. Hurston was born on January 15th, 1891 in Notasulga, Alabama. She made the difficult decision of leaving Howard, a historically Black university, to try her efforts as a writer alongside Langston Hughes and Alain Locke in the Harlem Renaissance.

Just one year before Hurston's arrival to Barnard, a cross was erected and burned in front of Furnald Hall at Columbia to protest a Black situated living in the dorm. The campus climate on racial issues was extremely tense, and it was in a time when lynching and cross burnings happened regularly in the south. To witness such an action in New York City and within Columbia was unprecedented and terrifying to black intellectuals who were beginning to be admitted to schools throughout the country. This

movement was also just following the beginning of the Great Migration, where over six million southern Black Americans migrated north to find better prospects outside of the segregated south. The Great Migration forced universities everywhere to act on the question of integration almost immediately. Zora was one of the individuals who choose to move north to see what other prospects would await her.

The Barnard College Committee on Transfers in 1925 recorded that Hurston would be transferring into the Barnard College with two remaining years to complete her degree and one elective credit for general science and that she earned while at Howard. It was determined best that Hurston not live on campus with the rest of the women at the college and in close proximity to the white male dominant student body at Columbia. Both campuses struggled with rampant anti-Semitism and racism. The small strides made by and for Jewish students to allow more comfort in their experience were not offered to women of color like Zora Hurston.

Annie Nathan Meyer and Hurston had an intimate relationship. On one occasion Hurston remarked, "To my dear friend Mrs. Annie Nathan Meyer, who hauled the mud to make me but loves me just the same." [35] This relationship began when Meyer gathered the funds to support Hurston through her time at Barnard. Hurston recognized the integrity and morality of Meyer who had been an active anti-lynching advocate for decades. Meyer attempted to introduce women of color and black women much earlier than Hurston's time, but the possibility of admitting black students on any of Columbia's campuses had never before stood a chance against the trustees of the schools. For the entirety of her time at Barnard, Zora Neale Hurston lived off campus and had many difficult interactions with students and faculty of the university.

One particularly jarring example of Hurston's experience and the sentiment of the time towards black women is expressed in a letter from the Dean of Bryn Mawr College to Dean Gildersleeve from 1930, just two years after Hurston's graduation. The letter asks Gildersleeve what her experiences are in admitting "negro women into residence", the dean writes,

“If so how it works especially whether her negro men friends call on her in the dormitories. The results of Hilda Smith admitting four negro women into the summer school seems to be that whenever entertainment are given a solid block a negro men from the neighborhood of Bryn Mawr appears in the audience”[36]

This correspondence between Gildersleeve and Dean Thomas of Bryn Mawr indicates that the decision to admit black women into Barnard college and other historically white women’s colleges around the region was a very unsettling move for administrators at the time. According to the logic of the time, just as admitting women ran the risk for admitting Jews and Blacks, admitting black women ran the risk of encouraging interactions with black men. The narrative of the danger black masculinity presents against white femininity, like the femininity present at Barnard, relied on an extremely racist understanding of Black men and women. Gildersleeve and Dean Thomas were only concerned with Black women’s presence in residence halls in regards to the possible threat of an “audience” of black men. This letter expresses fear and nervousness, not excitement for the education of Black women. It is a telling example of the threats black people posed on campus even after integration began.

Gildersleeve herself also showed a lack of support for Hurston in a letter to her first publisher at the Lippincott company. In this letter Gildersleeve describes her opinion on Zora Neale Hurston’s first published work. She writes, “ I confess I do not think as highly of it as some of its critics, it is interesting and convincing as a depiction of negro life, but I found a good deal of it rather hard reading-largely because of the dialect, and I do not feel that it quite succeeds its more tragic moments[37]. Dean Gildersleeve was a university woman. She wanted to maintain the classically Anglo-European ways of literature, art and sciences that Columbia University was founded upon. Hurston often wrote using African American vernacular and Gullah, which is a southern black American English. Though obviously difficult for some of her more uncultured white readers, Hurston’s work would go on to become literary masterpieces because of her use of language and her depictions of black life through more than story telling but through writing style and voice. This style was a tradition in literary that was gaining momentum in the Harlem Renaissance but not yet at Columbia and Barnard.

Gildersleeve's harsh criticism of the work reflects her ignorance towards the realities of Black people's lives. Examining Hurston's experiences demonstrates that Barnard and Columbia were not academically open spaces, welcoming the knowledge and languages of non-western or white cultures even further into the twentieth century. Looking at Hurston's experiences of being perceived as a liability or threat within the confines of the college alongside the bitter relationship and erasure of Annie Nathan Meyer, is an interesting point to examine just how different races of women experience Barnard as a feminist institution. Both women were largely ignored despite their brilliance, and both posed separate threats to the purity and future of the University and Barnard. The difference however is in experiences of safety. That Hurston felt uncomfortable and vulnerable on campus indicates the level of danger she confronted on a daily basis in New York as a Black women. The legacies and experiences of Frederick Barnard in conversation with Hurston's helps to explain the racial tension that black students like Hurston faced. Columbia maintained its anti-black sentiment and transitioned this sentiment into Barnard College. While white women and eventually even Jewish women were allowed entrance into the college, black women remained excluded from the college until decades into the college's existence. By that point, a strictly white feminism had been espoused, one that privileged white culture and found black life and the expression of black life to be unintelligible within academia.

Examining the lives and legacies of these three figures illuminates how the history and identity of Barnard College is unequivocally related to the system of slavery that predated the Constitution and helped to found and sustain the University into what it is today. Barnard College exists today with a reputation for its diversity and vast opportunity for all women to achieve success in higher education and beyond. The history of the college's founding and development complicates this narrative. The namesake of the college and former university president, Frederick A. P Barnard was directly tied to slavery as a slave owner himself and while he seemed to stand against the cruelty of the institution as a northerner, he greatly benefitted from racialized slavery both economically and in politics. Barnard's legacy as a slaveholder, educator and as the man behind coeducation at the university is depicted strongly through the founding and earliest days of the college.

Though it is widely believed to be a site of radicalism and acceptance, Barnard College left the legacy of Annie Nathan Meyer, the truest and original advocate of a women's only school at Columbia largely uncredited. Though it was Meyer who did the research and work for securing Barnard College, the school decided to reject Meyer's work and legacy and chose to promote Frederick Barnard, who stood against a women's only school, as the true founder of the college. Finally, by looking at some of the earlier days at Barnard, the upkeep of WASP admissions, and the admittance of a black student forty years into the founding of the college provide substantial evidence that like Columbia, Barnard preserved a strong sentiment of anti-blackness and exclusion and indirectly molded Barnard's feminism to only meet the needs of the white women who first attended the college.

This research should not debunk the successful strides in equal rights for women that certainly was achieved when higher education for women became more accessible. Rather, this research serves as a platform for further inquiry and discussion about the ways in which history affects political ideologies and approaches. The importance of this work lies in examining not just the unique history of these three individuals but also how their different experiences with conflicting identities reflected the positions not only inside of the university but within the society at large. Moreover, this work is concerned with memory and legacy. What does it mean that Barnard College would choose the legacy of a white slaveholder who used women's education partly as political strategy, and not the legacy of the woman who worked tirelessly to create a women's institution? My research suggests that Barnard's brand of feminism is a white feminist approach to equal rights for women and was originally founded with exclusions to most non-white women. I challenge that Barnard College needs to address this history and relationship with slavery and its afterlives. In doing so Barnard may begin to truly exist as an intersectional feminist space, where all women may experience the benefits of a women's only place of learning.

Endnotes

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[4] Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject*, 2.

[5] Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject*, 4.

[6] Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. 24.

[7] Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject*, 18

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[16] Brophy, "The Chancellor, the Slave, and the Student," 7.

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[32] Gordon, *Annie Nathan Meyer and Barnard College*.

[33] Gordon, *Annie Nathan Meyer and Barnard College*.

[34] Gordon, *Annie Nathan Meyer and Barnard College*.

[35] "Jewish Women's Archive: Annie Nathan Meyer."

[36] Zora Neale Hurston Documents, Barnard Archival Library, 1930 Scholar and Feminist Online.

[37] Zora Neale Hurston Documents, Barnard Archival Library, 1934 Scholar and Feminist Online.