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*Annie Nathan Meyer and Barnard College's Exclusivity*

Since its founding years, Columbia University has always been a center of wealth and intellect in the city of New York. In 1774, its founders had wanted to establish an institution that was exclusive to wealthy white males, yet be a pillar of one of the most influential colleges in the world. Illuminating this sense of exclusion, the university made it no secret that it would not allow women nor Blacks to enter its gates as students. These exclusions, however, were not unique to Columbia University. It was merely a reflection of the kind of society that individuals lived in at the time – beginning with ideals of white supremacy in the Colonial period that extended out into the early twentieth century.

As the nation was evolving, breaking free from British rule, some groups such as women sought change in the education system. Yet, even with the founding of women's colleges that began to take root in the northeastern states, New York City was lacking such an institution. Today, there are several prominent women's colleges in the United States, which are called the Seven Sisters. The first of the Seven Sisters was Mount Holyoke, founded in 1837 by Mary Lyon. It first served as a female seminary that was meant to promote higher education amongst women during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mount Holyoke Female Seminary was initially chartered as a teaching seminary in 1836, but with the institution officially became a College after fundraising from the Trustees and introduction of entrance exams. Shortly following the establishment of Mount Holyoke, Vassar College and Wellesley College opened following the pattern of Mount Holyoke.

As the need for the education of women was growing in the 1800s, the abolishment of slavery in 1865 also raised the question of the education of Blacks. Individual colleges

throughout the nation were being established to meet the needs of providing higher education to Blacks, yet there was also the question of the inclusion of Blacks at the historically white-only colleges. Nonetheless, some institutions were open to admitting Black students on its campuses. Mount Holyoke, for example admitted its first Black student in 1883, which represented a new era of education that would continue to propagate throughout other colleges. However, even in a diverse city such as New York, this idea remained controversial especially in a prestigious university such as Columbia that stood for white privilege and exclusivity.

Throughout this paper I seek to examine the founding of Barnard College and capture the struggle that certain resilient individuals faced in establishing the institution. The first part of the essay focuses on the individual after whom the College is named, Frederick AP Barnard and his support for coeducation at Columbia University. Then, I will examine the relationship between Columbia University and higher education for women through the Collegiate Courses for Women as well as the exclusion of Blacks. The main last part of the essay will discuss Annie Nathan Meyer, who is claimed to be one of the founders of Barnard College and her relationships with individuals that reflect not only the ideals for the education of women but also the presence of Blacks and minority groups at Barnard College.

### **Frederick A.P. Barnard**

As New York City was rapidly growing into a large commercial, financial, and industrial center, the need for women's higher education grew stronger and stronger. In 1873, a suffragist named Lillie Deveraux Blake, who was the descendant of two of Columbia's presidents came knocking on Frederick Barnard's door. Speaking on behalf of five young women, some of whom excelled and graduated colleges elsewhere in the states, Blake insisted on their admission to

Columbia University. In an attempt to bring more students to its campus, Barnard positively received Blake's plea.

Frederick A.P. Barnard's role at Columbia University was largely influenced by his upbringing. He was born in 1809 in Sheffield, Massachusetts and raised by his mother, who taught him how to read at the age of three and helped him develop a love for mathematics. He attended Yale at the age of fourteen, studying mathematics and science. There, he developed close relationships with his professors such as Benjamin Silliman, who helped shape his outlook on coeducation. While at Yale, Silliman often invited female auditors to attend his lectures. When he attended the Hartford Grammar School for boys, Barnard developed a close platonic relationship with the headmistress of a neighboring female seminary and oftentimes attended her weekly soirees. He was able to take note of the influence women's presence had on the male students at lectures, as it pushed the male students to be more attentive and intellectually curious.

When Barnard accepted professorship in mathematics and natural philosophy at the University of Alabama in 1838, he brought over his ideas of coeducation to the south. The male students at the university were so rowdy that the institution had to shut down for a year because the faculty had resigned. Recalling the lectures of Silliman at Yale, Barnard attended to the culture of chivalry in the south and opened his classes to female students.

In 1854, Barnard moved to the University of Mississippi where he became the professor of astronomy, physics, and civil engineering. His northern upbringing made it difficult for him to fit in with the southern society. Though he was vocal about his views on the South's failure to capitalize on the expansion of education, with regard to slavery he remained silent. His views on slavery, however, became more evident when he came home one day to learn that his female slave had been beaten and raped by a student of the university. Barnard believed that the

university ought to dismiss the student, but the faculty refused to accept the word of a slave against a white male. Instead, Barnard was put on trial before the board of trustees on the charge that he was “unsound on the slavery question” but was later cleared of all charges. Regardless, Barnard developed a bitter attitude towards southern society and the institution of slavery.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Barnard made it clear that he was sympathetic with the North and sought to return there. With the help of his wife, Margaret, he became acquainted with prominent scholars and secured a position in the North. He accepted the presidency of Columbia and dedicated himself to helping others. He was open to the idea of accepting women to the university, as it would provide three clear benefits: improve discipline in the college, add revenue, and place Columbia at the center of educational reform. However, on the question of the admittance of black students, he remained silent and without opinion.

### **Columbia University and Frederick A.P. Barnard**

The relationship between Columbia University’s Board of Trustees and Frederick Barnard was not simple. When the Board of Trustees hired him, they had high hopes of him turning Columbia around and making it the forefront of education in the United States. The conservative trustees were sure that Barnard would maintain Columbia’s traditions of white male exclusivity given the fact that he had been ordained as an Episcopal priest. The progressive trustees were reassured in his position with the fact that he would modernize Columbia’s curriculum in the mathematics and sciences.

Barnard’s ambition started to create a divide between him and the trustees. First and foremost, he used his deafness as a means to control the trustees and increase his power. At board meetings, he would have the trustees speak into tubes connected with long cords to

Barnard who sat at the head of the table. This system was more trouble than it was worth, so the trustees oftentimes allowed Barnard's resolutions to pass.

Frederick A.P. Barnard was not the only one criticized by the trustees. His wife, Margaret McCurry Barnard was also under fire with her weekly soirees that she hosted for leading statesmen and authors. At first, she was well-liked but soon individuals such as George Templeton Strong began to label her as a "strong-minded" woman, who was merely adopting to the changing times. By 1873, more than seventy colleges began to admit women and both Harvard and Yale were having active campaigning for coeducation. It was also known to students of Columbia at the time, that several professors such as geologist John S. Newberry allowed women to attend their lectures. With such progressive movements, President Barnard met with the trustees to introduce the admission of women as students of Columbia in 1873, as he believed that the nationwide movement for coeducation would be favorably taken by the trustees.

The idea of coeducation was heavily debated; on one hand, board members such as Reverend Benjamin Haight were willing to listen to Barnard's presentation of Lilli Deveraux Blake's petition. On the other hand, several faculty of the college such as John Burgess and Reverend Dr. Morgan Dix were heavily against such a progressive movement. In correspondences between Barnard and Burgess, Burgess makes it clear that the admittance of women at Columbia was not something that would be considered. Yet, that was an opinion of only one individual, and so Barnard chose to push for coeducation.

Reverend Benjamin Haight referred the matter of coeducation to Reverend Dix with the hope that question be considered given that Dix's position as the rector of Trinity Church would cast more influence on the board members. Since the founding of King's College in 1754, the

rector of Trinity Church always held a strong position over the college's affairs and had considerable influence. With Dix serving as the current board member and rector of the church, Haight believed he would be open to the progressive idea of coeducation at Columbia College. As a graduate of Columbia himself, Dix held conservative beliefs and was concerned over the dissipation of religious tradition at the university. Nonetheless, he agreed to consider the petition presented before him though he did not hide his discontent over the matter.

Though Dix did share the interests of women such as Blake over the matter of education for women, it was only through his affiliation with Sisters of St. Mary. This school, which was under his jurisdiction trained young women to be ideal Christian wives and mothers. It was unlike what Blake was petitioning for Columbia College, where women would have the opportunity of pursuing the same liberal education in the arts as men. For him, the coeducation was a passing fashion, and so he ultimately rejected the petition. The overall sentiment on campus among students was that coeducation should not be pursued at Columbia. President Barnard probably voted against the petition as well, believing that coeducation was a matter that could be put aside for another occasion, and instead turned his focus on expanding the current education offered at Columbia. Though he was considered to be a progressive individual, his decision to table the matter of coeducation represented the idea that he would only pursue matters that had high chances of coming into fruition. Thus it is no surprise that when he joined Columbia – an institution whose traditions lay in the ideas of white supremacy, his attitudes towards Blacks remained unspoken.

When he assumed his position as president, Barnard produced annual reports to the board of trustees at the end of each academic year. As the issue of coeducation kept reappearing during board meetings, Barnard chose to include them in his publications much to the trustees' dismay.

First mentioned in 1879, he published an essay titled “On the Expediency of Receiving Young Women as Students at Columbia College”. In this essay, he recognized the developing technological society and that women ought to be given equal opportunity to receive training. He critiqued the widespread sentiment that women do not add value to education and depress the educational quality by stating that in his experiences, women increased the quality of education. Barnard used his examples of male students at the universities he lectured at in the south before moving to New York, in which they were so unruly that the university had to be shut down temporarily. He argued that admitting women to Columbia would turn the institution into a greater university, not that it would promote higher education amongst women.

Barnard chose to bring up the topic of women attendance at lectures at the board meeting in late 1879, by stating that they ought to give formal recognition to those women who have long been attending them. Around that time, a local Episcopal school for girls reached out to Barnard with the hope that he would support their regular visits to lectures in chemistry. Though he was not opposed to it, he had to find a way around the topic by first proposing an amendment to the by-laws that would permit women to attend the lectures. His proposal was automatically shut down by Dix and other board members who believed any formal change would escalate to the issue of admitting women to Columbia, and eventually all other groups of people including Blacks. However, Barnard argued that the resolution that was passed several years prior stated that the admittance of women was not against the by-laws of the college. In fact, the resolution was passed so that freeloaders could not attend lectures without having matriculated as a student of the college. The by-laws made no mention of women, and the women who attended the lectures were allowed to do so by the professors. Regardless, the board of trustees agreed that no woman shall be allowed to attend any of the lectures.

Nonetheless, Barnard continued to push for coeducation, and published a second essay titled “The Higher Education of Women” in 1880. In it, he describes how coeducation was starting to become accepted in prestigious universities of England and though the movement there has not been as rapid in the United States, their longstanding traditions of conservative all-male education was starting to break down. Barnard did not push for coeducation simply for the fact that women and men should pursue studies in the same walls, but rather that women should attain the best education in New York City which meant at Columbia.

The board of trustees still remained unmoved by his appeals, so once again Barnard issued another essay also titled “The Higher Education of Women” in 1881. The only responses that he received were negative, and they were both from the board of trustees as well as the students. The students expressed their dismay in student publications such as *Acta Columbiana*, where the editors wrote that coeducation deteriorated the quality of education.

Despite the opposition, Barnard began to reach out to prominent white Protestant elites in New York. He turned to reform-minded wives of the business elite such as Mrs. J. P. Morgan. Barnard believed that if he could have the support of respectable women, it would help change the trustees’ minds about the admission of women. By the beginning of 1882, he had support of eight women, one of whom was Mrs. Morgan. In their letters, they asked Barnard to compile his annual reports especially the essays he published regarding those on the education of women. Several months later, they formed the Association for Promoting the Higher Education for Women whose main objective was to fight for the admission of women to Columbia and promote a higher education amongst them – their main objective was attaining coeducation.

When Reverend Dix heard about this meeting, he became just as concerned as the students of Columbia. Arguing that coeducation would do no good at Columbia, Dix did

everything he could to make life difficult for Barnard with his current position as president. He did not succeed, however. The petition for coeducation at Columbia was signed by over 1,300 people and completed in 1883. Coeducation was supported by individuals such as Ulysses S. Grant and Reverend Arthur Brooks, who would not too long after play a vital role in maintaining Barnard College.

### **Columbia's Collegiate Courses for Women by Barnard**

As Columbia was growing in terms of both its academics and student population, certain individuals felt it was necessary for the several libraries on campus to be consolidated into one. Melvil Dewey, the individual responsible for the Dewey Decimal System used in libraries was the one to step up and petition for the establishment of the School of Library Economy at Columbia. Restructuring of the university libraries commenced in the fall of 1883 when eight independent collections of the library were consolidated into one. At the time, Frederick Barnard had been on the Board of Trustees of Columbia College, and took a position to be on the Library Committee of the Trustees as well. As president of Columbia College, Barnard took the initiative of proposing opening a school for the training of librarians. In his proposal he outlines the needs of proper training of librarians and explains that:

in the past few years the work of a librarian has come to be regarded as a distinct profession, affording opportunities of usefulness in the educational field inferior to no other, and requiring superior abilities to discharge its duties well...A rapidly increasing number of competent men and women are taking up the librarian's occupation as a life work.

Courses were laid out in 1884 for the first year, but by 1886 several distinct studies were made available for the school's students. The school was divided into six groups: course in library economy; course in bibliography; course in literature; extra lectures by specialists; extra lectures

by reading librarians; and college lectures. Additionally, students had the option of practical training to “give the best results” for the pupils.

What had made this school unique was that the last of the six groups was the “College Lectures,” which were “open to the students, without charge, a large number of interesting and valuable lectures, conferences, and meetings covering a wide range of topics in science, literature, and art.” However, these lectures were not directly tied to those of Columbia College, and women could not participate in the opportunities outside the College Course that was established in 1884 for women who wanted a Columbia degree. Furthermore, though this school did allow the admittance of women, it still represented what Columbia stood for – white exclusivity meaning that of all the students that attended, not a single Black was admitted.

While the Library School was in the works, coeducation remained a central issue. In the spring of 1883, Reverend Dix met with the board of trustees to denounce the petition put forth by the Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women in New York. Unlike in the previous years when Barnard understood chances of coeducation at Columbia were slim to none and he voted with the board to reject petitions, this time he voted against the reverend’s report. The board chairman, Hamilton Fish decided to approach this rather differently than Dix would have liked. He set up a committee that would review the petition and vote on it. However, the committee was comprised of men who all had differing views on coeducation – some in support of and others against. After reviewing the petition, the committee produced a report which paved the way for a coeducation of sorts at the institution. Firstly, the board ought to establish a course of study that would be pursued outside of college but yet result in either a diploma or testimony of completion of sorts. Secondly, it explored the idea of establishing a separate college that would be just for women and discussed the financing that would go into it.

When this became public, the press began to recognize the board's willingness to compromise and support coeducation. Dix, of course, was heavily against this popular opinion claiming that the public has been very much debauched by President Barnard and societal women of New York. Published in the *New York Tribune* in March 1883 were both the partial report presented by the specially formed committee as well as Reverend Dix's commentary on the subject. In response to the printing of the report, Dix states that if it is to be printed in full, "I am afraid we will be misunderstood. In no manner the public have been laboring under a misapprehension regarding our attitude toward extending to women the advantages of our college....The public have been misinformed, through excitement, about our willingness to allow women to enjoy the advantages of our college." The board ultimately rejected the proposal, but allowed the committee to draft a plan for what would be known as the Collegiate Course.

While there were talks of allowing women to pursue higher education at Columbia, several members of the committee blatantly expressed their opinions that women would not be attending any of the same lectures men were. In fact, several members such as Agnew argued that a separate college, similar to the Harvard Annex (a separate institution for women tied to Harvard College) be established. These board members did not want coeducation at Columbia, but rather an annex for women that would be governed by Columbia and taught by its professors – that way, Columbia University would remain to stand for its traditions as a college for white men. Though it was difficult for the college to secure all the proper funding for actually establishing a separate college, the committee explored the option of creating a curriculum that was just for women. It would be patterned on the Columbia curriculum, and if the women were able to pass the same exams that were given to men, they would receive certificates of completion.

The board of trustees had finally reached a compromise and the Collegiate Course for Women was established at Columbia. It did not, by any means establish coeducation at Columbia, nor did it offer women the same opportunities as it did to men, but it was a step in the right direction. Influenced by the women attending these courses, Barnard pushed for their cause. Through him, women were allowed to use the Columbia libraries and were allowed to consult the faculty on what was to be expected of them during their studies. In 1884, only six women passed the entrance exams, but by 1888 twenty eight women were enrolled. Despite the special coursework that was established for the women, the board of trustees still refused to allow women to attend lectures. Nonetheless, there were several professors who were supportive of coeducation and allowed women to attend.

Returning back to Melvil Dewey, he was recruited in 1883 from Wellesley College by Barnard with the hopes that modernizing the library system at Columbia would better the education provided. He was supported by none other than John W. Burgess – the same political science professor who strongly opposed higher education of women. However, Burgess wanted Columbia to thrive and become the epicenter of education as much as Barnard. Dewey believed that his library system and education should be open to both men and women, and so in 1886 he persuaded the board of trustees to open the School of Library Economy. It was open to students who completed two years of college, and itself was a two-year program after which students were awarded the bachelor of library science degree. Dewey was a strong supporter of coeducation, and believed his classes ought to be open to all except persons of color. He did not hide the fact that he actively sought out to recruit women for the first class, but word eventually reached the board of trustees who reminded him that coeducation was not supported at Columbia. Rather than barring women from attending his school, Dewey simply bypassed the

trustees' request and started to hold classes at the college chapel rather than the university's classrooms.

Much of the success that Dewey had attained while at Columbia came from the support and protection from Barnard. However, by the beginning of 1889, Barnard's health began to deteriorate and the board of trustees forced Dewey to resign. In April 1889, Dewey was transferred to the State Library in Albany as part of an agreement with the regents of the State University of New York. Though twenty-three students had completed the library courses, the school was shut down and the trustees refused to acknowledge the students' completion.

### **Annie Nathan Meyer and Columbia Courses**

Annie Nathan Meyer, born in New York City on February 19, 1867, was the youngest daughter of Annie Florence Nathan and Robert Weeks Nathan. Her family was of a prominent background, being descendants of Gershom Mendes Seixas and distant cousins of Benjamin N. Cardozo and Emma Lazarus. When the stock market crashed in 1875, the Nathan family moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin, where they remained until Annie Nathan Meyer's mother's death in 1878. Though Annie Nathan Meyer left school shortly before graduation in 1881 to assume the management of the household after her sister's marriage, she had within her a passion for education.

When the family moved back to New York City, Annie Nathan Meyer had spent her free time in the evenings secretly studying for entrance examinations to Columbia University. When she had told her father about her studies, he simply replied: "Annie, you will never marry. Men despise women with brains." Much to her father's disliking, she passed the examination and entered the Collegiate Course for Women at Columbia University in 1885. The education at

Columbia University, though argued to be coeducational in a sense, was not the same for women as it was for men.

Annie Nathan Meyer was given a book of instructions for every course she was enrolled in, and had the opportunity of interviewing with professors once a semester – in autumn and in the winter. During these interviews, the professors would assign readings to the women that were deemed necessary for examinations at the end of each semester. After reading the pages that were assigned, Annie Nathan Meyer found the exams shockingly difficult. It was not due to the lack of studying on her part because she had kept up with all the readings, but rather the fact that the knowledge that was tested came from class lectures. Despite having a special courses for women at Columbia, they were not allowed to attend any of the lectures aside from the handful that sympathetic professors had allowed. Regardless, she did the best that she could and wrote a note on the exam booklet indicating that some of the questions asked were not addressed in the readings she was assigned.

Annie Nathan Meyer was not pleased with the education she had received at Columbia. It was unsatisfactory in many respects outside the lack of proper lecturing; some professors were hostile to women, young male students stared her down whenever she entered the library, and the lack of faculty guidance made studying particularly difficult. In 1887, Annie Nathan Meyer withdrew from the Collegiate Courses and married Dr. Alfred Meyer. However, her decision to withdraw did not change her perception and willingness to pursue the need for a higher education for women. After dropping out, Meyer first turned to Dewey before Columbia sent him upstate. She had a close relationship with the college librarian and knew she could count on his support for the education of women. In fact, Dewey was by far more enthusiastic about women's college education than Frederick Barnard, and even encouraged Meyer to found a

women's college at Columbia. Though Barnard was a proponent of women's education, Meyer ultimately avoided him and began organizing "Certain Friends of the Higher Education of Women" to pressure the institution to establish a separate college that was to be affiliated with Columbia. Unlike the Harvard Annex, Meyer wanted Columbia's women's college to provide women a university degree, not just a certificate of completion.

In January 1888, Meyer wrote a letter to the editor of *The Nation* in which she made her case about the need for a women's college in New York City. Meyer began by discussing the fact that from New York City, there are two women at Cornell, four at Bryn Mawr, thirteen at Smith, seventeen at Vassar, and thirty-one at Wellesley, all of whom had to leave the city to attend a college that accepted women. She explains that students at a private school in New York, who had taken courses to prepare them for college, could not all attend the women's colleges outside New York because their parents would not allow them to travel. Meyer then goes on to discuss that the courses women attend and attain education from self-studies are not as valuable as the education they would receive from attending a proper college. She writes:

Of the women in New York who are longing for *something definite* to do in the way of study, and are prevented from attending college because there is none in the city, thirty-three pursue this course, besides the thirty-six others that live in the vicinity, thus making a total of sixty-nine girls in New York and vicinity who are studying by this method for lack of better.

In this letter, Meyer goes on to express her discontent with the Collegiate Courses provided by Columbia. She explains that thirty-eight girls began the course, but by graduation eight dropped out,

either from discouragement at the slender advantages offered and many difficulties to contend against, or perhaps from nervous dread of encountering the phalanx of staring youths...twenty-eight girls have worked nobly, actuated by the sentiment that a principle was at stake. They felt that they were there on trial, on probation; several of them though deriving but little benefit from their labors, still kept on, hoping that their perseverance would finally induce the trustees to open to women students the full privileges of the college.

Annie Nathan Meyer explained that when the Collegiate Course was first adopted by Columbia College on June 8, 1883, the outline of the program “read excellently” but was soon a disappointment. The Collegiate Course served to cover up the fact that Columbia would not admit women and support coeducation, but rather make it seem as if it was making strides towards it. Instead, the only difference that the women felt in terms of education, according to Meyer was that their independent studies could now take place on the Columbia campus and could have a small sense of “coeducation” in the semiannual examinations there were required to take and pass. Annie Nathan Meyer ends her eight page letter with the following:

In this ‘dark, gray city,’ this huge, growing, striving, ambitious city with its many means of satisfying life’s demands, there is one lack – the lack of a college where women may attain a complete education without leaving their homes and families. Ought we not, therefore, to begin at once to organize an association for the collegiate instruction of women by the professors and other instructors of Columbia College?

### **Annie Nathan Meyer and founding Barnard College**

Annie Nathan Meyer went on to gather support for her cause. She reached out to Mary Mapes Dodge, who was the editor of a children’s magazine and continued working with Melvil Dewey. With their help, Meyer suggested to the board of trustees to establish a separate women’s college that would be under the direct supervision of Columbia. She based her vision on the Harvard Annex, but made the case that unlike the women who completed the coursework at the Harvard Annex, the women of the Columbia annex ought to be rewarded with Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Ph.D. degrees. Should the board give consent, the Society for the Instruction of Women by the Professors and Other Instructors of Columbia College would be responsible for raising the funds for the annex. Turning to the Association for Promoting the Higher Education for Women, Meyer was able to secure over fifty signatures in support of the college. While petitioning for the establishment of a women’s college, Meyer reached out to the influential

women in New York at the time. This meant that the support she received was from women of wealthy status, as they represented the elite. Their support would soon translate to what Meyer's college would come to represent – a shadow of Columbia University as it would be a women's college for the white privileged.

However, not everyone at the association shared her vision for coeducation. Though there were instances in which schools promoted coeducation, the members of the association believed that coeducation in New York City, let alone a higher education institution such as Columbia was too radical even with President Barnard's support. Their rejection did not stop Meyer, as she went on to support the Brearley School for girls that would help prepare them for the Collegiate Course at Columbia and other institutions that accepted women. She was able to win the support of some of the trustees, such as Reverend Arthur Brooks who had signed a petition put forth by the Association for Promoting Higher Education for Women a few years prior.

Meyer witnessed the pressures some of the trustees and professors were putting on those who opposed coeducation. Dewey had long petitioned to allow women to undertake his studies at the new library school; he worked closely with Barnard to see it through. Meyer took it upon herself to meet with each of the trustees individually, saving Reverend Dix for last. When she met with Dix, he explained that he was not against women's education but rather against women who spoke out against him publicly and petitioned for coeducation. In other words, he was hiding his disliking for women and made excuses for his actions as he believed in tradition and exclusion of anyone who was not a white male in pursuing higher education.

At the beginning of March 1888, Hamilton Fish presented Meyer's petition before the board. Surprisingly, as it was headed by Dix, several days later it was approved as long as it was clear that Meyer would assume all responsibility for the financing of the annex. Additionally, she

would have to outline a plan that was acceptable in terms of organizing this new institution.

Meyer did not hear the results of the meeting until the fall of 1888 due to the fact that President Barnard has resigned at the very same meeting due to deteriorating health and the board's secretary failed to convey the results to Meyer.

Upon hearing the news that the petition was passed, Meyer quickly set out to organize a committee to build up a college for women that would be affiliated with Columbia. Her decision to head the committee was significant in the fact that she wanted it to be different from the Columbia's board of trustees. She persuaded two prominent lawyers to join her committee and two women – Ella Weed, who was the principal of a well-known girls' school, and Winifred Edgerton, who graduated from the Collegiate Course at Columbia.

Meyer wasted no time in organizing her new school. She wrote the by-laws, organized the board of trustees, and secured a building for the women's college. By February 4, 1889 Meyer was ready to present her plan to the Columbia trustees. At her suggestion, the new college would be named after President Barnard who dedicated his years at Columbia at petitioning higher education for women. In a letter that was written several years after the college's founding by the board of trustees, it explains that "Our College was named for our patron, President Barnard because he stood for woman's education. In what we may call his state paper, - his reports as President of Columbia, he pleaded for the cause we represent, and in one said, 'That the interests of society, the mental culture of woman should not be inferior in its character to that of man.'...Fitting then that he should give out college its name." Though it was Meyer who suggested the college be named after Barnard, she did feel disappointed that it would not be attributed to her founding due to the fact that the board of trustees believed that her name was too Jewish to name a school after. The board of trustees wanted Barnard College to represent white

feminism and traditions similar to those of Columbia, which meant that it ought to be named after someone who represented Protestantism. At the time, additionally, New York City was home to large populations of elite German Jews as well as Eastern European Jews; the new college's location and association with Columbia made it a prestigious institution and naming the college after a Jewish woman would further the applications of the Jewish women who lived in the city. The board of trustees believed that this would drive away the socially desirable applicants who were women from wealthy Protestant families.

One of the things that the board of trustees had to change in Meyer's proposal was regarding the faculty that would teach at the college. Despite being modeled on the Harvard Annex, Meyer proposed that faculty be not directly affiliated with Columbia but rather individuals who were approved by the Columbia board of trustees. In order for the proposal to be passed, they argued that faculty must be Columbia faculty so as to ensure equal education for both women and men at the two colleges. Once the issue was settled, Barnard College was created.

Annie Nathan Meyer did face opposition when she helped found Barnard College. For one, it was named so after the death of President Barnard so he never had a say in the matter. His wife, Margaret McCurry Barnard argued that her late husband would never have approved the establishment of Barnard College, as he believed coeducation should be education of both men and women in the same classroom, not in separate schools. From Meyer's point of view, her aggressive actions to found a separate women's college are not unreasonable. Having attended the Collegiate Course at Columbia, she felt the negative stigma of a woman present at a lecture that was mainly comprised of men and the pressures of carrying on her studies in such an

environment. Her negative experiences at Columbia justified her need for coeducation that was not true coeducation, but rather an opportunity at higher education for women.

When she was organizing her board of trustees, she tried to make it as diverse and inclusive as possible. First, it was to be divided evenly amongst men and women – twenty-two in total. Secondly, each individual had come from a different background. Though her board only had two Jewish individuals – Jacob Schiff and herself, it was two more than were on the Columbia's board. The board included bankers, politicians, lawyers, authors, educators, philanthropists, and religious leaders – what was impressive about Barnard College was not that it was a successfully established women's college, but that it was established by such a diverse group of people that it was even notable when gender, race, and religious exclusivity were pervasive. Yet, of all the individuals on the board of trustees, not a single person was Black. Though Meyer promoted diversity, even at that time the inclusion of a person of color on a college board was not acceptable nor even brought up in discussion.

Though the plan was laid out to commence operations at Barnard College, there was the question of funding. In a letter by the Regents Office in May 1889, Annie Nathan Meyer was told by a Dr. Watson that by the laws and ordinances of the Regents of the University, Barnard College may be incorporated for five years under its original charter and would expire if proper needs and funding are not met by the end of five years. Jacob Schiff, who had been named Treasurer of the college indicated that Barnard College would need at least \$100,000 in assets before the institution could open its doors. The breakdown of the funding allocation was as follows: \$5,000 in yearly income; \$2,000 in tuition; \$7,500 in expenses including the costs of heat and electricity. The college opened its doors operating with under \$10,000, half of which was provided by J.P. Morgan and the rest by thirty-six people who would each donate \$100 for

five years. Barnard College could not be sustainable after the expiration of the temporary charter if it were not to be able to secure the \$100,000. What was proposed in the letter, however was a solution. Columbia College had the “full power under their charter to make Barnard College a department of Columbia College for such time and under such conditions as they may deem best, and this, under the circumstances which you mention may be the best arrangement to make for the present.”

Despite what seemed to be discouraging news for Meyer, she wrote a letter to Dewey, who was already at the time employed by the Regents Office in Albany. In his response, he explains to Meyer to not be concerned with the lack of funding and to not even consider the proposal put forth by Dr. Watson to turn over to Columbia College. As having a role in the Regents Office, Dewey had a say in the incorporation of schools, which meant that he had the power to help Meyer extend and overlook the insufficient funds matter and make Barnard College a viable and thriving institution. Although Dewey was pressured to leave Columbia, he still took great interest in its affairs and Barnard College’s affiliation. In a letter addressed to Mr. Silas Brown Brownell, who was on the Board of Trustees, Dewey presents himself as “a strong friend of Barnard College. I shall gladly do all in my power to assist” with chartering Barnard College.

In his attitude towards helping the board of trustees of Barnard, Dewey gives off the tone as if he was waiting for a moment to see the board of trustees of Columbia College fail. In his correspondences, he explains that in his “whole five years at Columbia was a constant struggle against the anti-woman element, and it was with great delight that I saw Barnard College coming into so promising an existence.” By the summer of 1889, Dewey was sending more reassuring letters to Brownell regarding the chartering of Barnard College; he explained that the Governor

was convinced into signing the bill incorporating Barnard College, and should the college be able to attain an endowment of \$100,000 in the next five years it will be permanently incorporated.

In a Statement of Receipts pulled from the early 1900s, Barnard College had many donors and subscribers who were willing to fund the college. The annual subscribers who donated \$100 each included Dr. Alfred Meyer, Reverend Arthur Brooks, Jacob Schiff, Mrs. J. P. Morgan and Mrs. Seth Low who was the wife of the President of Columbia at the time. Surprisingly, W. C. Schermerhorn was also an annual subscriber despite the fact that when the issue of starting a women's college first came up at the Columbia board meetings, he was not very supportive of the issue. Yet, the college had trouble raising funds that it needed for daily operations. Oftentimes, the Finance Committee issued letters asking the friends of the college to help raise money to cover the deficits the college was facing. In 1891, for example, the committee asked for \$8,000 that it needed immediately. The year before, it had a deficit of only \$6,500. What is most interesting is that even in the college's pleas for funding, the "friends of the college" were all white members of the city's elite. With the exception of Schiff, they were also Protestant for the most part which meant that even though Barnard College was prized to be called diverse, it sought help from those who represented what the college ultimately stood for – white privilege.

### **Barnard College's Maintenance of Exclusivity**

Barnard College seemed to be revolutionary from the beginning. Not only did it have a board of trustees that represented diversity that was not yet fully accepted in a rapidly evolving city such as New York, but reflected that point even through its students. Barnard attracted a

unique, yet diverse type of woman. Firstly, unlike other women's colleges, Barnard attracted daughters of Jewish and Catholic backgrounds in addition to Protestant. The young women represented all economic classes, and were the daughters of the wealthy who wished their daughters to remain in New York City as well as the daughters of those who had to remain in the city because they could not afford to spend four years residing elsewhere. In order to ensure the possibility of every qualified woman to be able to afford going to Barnard, the trustees began to raise scholarship funds.

Despite the positive attitude that Barnard College seemed to give off, the college was not affordable to all and some women had to pay extra for certain classes. Additionally, the college was not open to admitting Black students onto its campus. It was not until the 1920s that the campus of Barnard experienced a change in the composition of its graduating classes. Annie Nathan Meyer, after the founding of Barnard College, went on to work closely with the NAACP because her advocacy for women's higher education soon evolved into advocacy for racial equality. Meyer believed that success is attained through hard work, and opportunities should not be limited to the select few groups in American society. It is not known why Meyer had not included any Blacks on her first board of trustees – perhaps it was because the feat of getting approval for the establishment of Barnard College was outrageously successful that allowing Blacks to serve on the board would result in the reversal of the approval by Columbia. Nonetheless, Meyer was soon open to the idea of further diversifying Barnard's student population.

However, even in the 1920s, Barnard's board of trustees and especially Dean Virginia Gildersleeve were not as open to the idea. Virginia Gildersleeve was the definition of white privilege. She was the daughter of Judge Henry Alger Gildersleeve, who graduated Columbia

Law School, and had an older brother who was also a graduate of Columbia. Gildersleeve attended the Brearley School – an all-girls private school in New York City and went on to attend Barnard College. Thus, it is no surprise that her actions as Dean of Barnard College reflected her background growing up – that of white privilege and exclusivity. As Barnard College was already admitting Jewish women, Gildersleeve believed there should be a quota. She admitted to limiting admissions to Barnard College by using “geographic diversity” as a cover-up. According to the policy of “geographic diversity,” applicants were screened, asked about national origin, parental birthplaces, as well as religious affiliation. Furthermore, Barnard College used intelligence exams to weed out the Jewish applicants who were from lower social and economic standings.

While Gildersleeve believed the exams and screening processes were best for keeping out certain whole groups of people, Meyer believed they ought to be used to help the qualified candidates achieve success and make something of themselves. This relates to Meyer’s own upbringing, one in which she got to where she was through her own hard work and won acceptance in social and professional circles as a result of those achievements. When she went on to work with the NAACP, she met Zora Neale Hurston.

Zora Neale Hurston was a black student at Howard University, who was fully immersed in black folk life and culture and had ambitions of becoming a part of the circle of prominent writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Upon meeting Hurston, Annie Nathan Meyer helped fund a scholarship that would allow Hurston to attend Barnard College. This would be a major breakthrough in Barnard’s history if Hurston was to attend. Racism and anti-Semitism were prevalent at both Barnard and Columbia’s campuses, as in 1924 a cross was erected and burned in front of Furnald Hall to protest the occupancy of a black student in its dorm. Regardless,

Meyer believed Hurston would take full advantage of what Barnard had to offer and would add to its diversity.

Hurston was admitted in 1925 as a transfer student and as the first Black student at Barnard, yet that did not come without complications. The board of trustees, as well as Dean Gildersleeve did not want Hurston to live on Barnard's campus. They believed that the mingling of black students between Barnard and Columbia would undermine the traditions both colleges stood for – the ideals of white exclusivity. Furthermore, the administrators of the college feared that any intellectual change would bring down the very same traditions. Hurston was known to write literature in a style that was different from the classical Anglo-European tone and narrative, which went against what was taught at Barnard and Columbia since each of the colleges' founding. Her style came off as difficult for uncultured whites to understand as it was written in a more storytelling tone – a style that was prevalent in the Harlem Renaissance.

Barnard College and its administrators found it difficult to accept change that was occurring on its campus, yet it was an inevitable part of helping shape the college into what it is today. Though Barnard does not have direct ties to slavery, its relationship with the afterlife of slavery ought to be examined more carefully and its history ought to reflect the brand of white feminism that excluded many non-white women during the time of its founding. Today, Barnard College represents a liberal culture, one that is accepting of everyone. Yet, looking back at its history it leaves out many aspects that failed to represent what it stands for today. It largely discredits Annie Nathan Meyer, who furiously struggled to establish a college for women in a society where white men on the Columbia board of trustees believed women do not need to be educated outside domestic work. It largely discredits the fact that it excluded Blacks from its campus for four decades after its founding. It largely discredits the fact that even after the

admission of minority groups, the institution's administrators still sought ways to maintain the old traditional ideals of white exclusivity through admission screenings and intelligence exams. Barnard College was named after a man who represented all those things – white privilege and attitude that was little open to change in a progressive era, not after the woman who founded it. Its history of exclusion is something that cannot be overlooked, and it is a silence that needs to be confronted and only then can Barnard College truly regard itself as the center of intersectional feminist ideals.

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