



“The Ideal Home for the Embryonic New Woman:”

Barnard College and the Housing Imperative

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“...so that when we have a hall of our own we may go into it with some sort of college life already started; the development of a Barnard spirit and idea, so that we may stand for something in the dormitory and in the eyes of strangers who come from outside to visit us.”¹

-Founder of the Whittier Hall Association

¹ “The Barnard Club of Whittier Hall,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, January 18, 1904, The Barnard College Archives and Special Collections, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19040118-1>.

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Introduction

This thesis will examine student, alumnae, and administrative involvement in Barnard's residential housing arrangements and policies from the college's move from its first site on Madison Avenue to the opening of Hewitt Hall on its Morningside campus in 1925. This era is instructive in understanding how early Barnard students came to exercise agency in where and how they lived— impacting the spatial, cultural, and sexual landscape of the campus. The period was most acutely shaped by students and their ongoing negotiation with the administration and alumnae regarding rules, social norms, and space.

I draw extensively upon secondary works regarding Barnard, Columbia, and Morningside Heights, different in focus and instrumental to this project. This includes Andrew Dolkart's *Morningside Heights: A History of its Architecture and Development*, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz's *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s*, Rosalind Rosenberg's *Changing the Subject: How the Women of Columbia Shaped the Way We Think About Sex and Politics*, and lastly Robert McCaughey's in-press work *Gotham Sister: A History of Barnard College, Columbia University in the City of New York*. Students' investment in systems of surveillance, while not universally accepted, was tied to societal concern over the loss of femininity through classical academic study. To assuage gendered anxieties and recover this perceived loss, students became the driving force in producing systems of self-governance and supporting greater administrative involvement in students' lives outside of the classroom. The perceived loss of femininity at Barnard also connects to the shifting attitudes towards students' romantic and erotic relationships in on-campus dormitories.

Students' investment in maintaining respectable femininity through the fight for on-campus housing was also tied to notions of class, race, and religion. This period is a notable era of racial formation, and Barnard works as a site of highly documented (if mediated) interaction between the children of elite Protestants and newly immigrated German, Irish, and Eastern European Jews. While I will not deal with the assimilation of these immigrant groups into whiteness, the setting of Barnard housing offers a view into how new immigrant groups' increased access to elite, wealthy institutions was challenged through conflicts over space, housing, and respectable femininity. The ongoing negotiation over space in the city and the college, as well as residential life's continuous development, provided ample space for political and social experimentation.

The temporal boundaries of this project begin and end during a period in which Morningside Heights and Barnard College were overwhelmingly white. The latter half of this thesis is during the same period in which Harlem grew to be and was nationally known as a black cultural mecca, the result of the Great Migration of black Americans and Caribbean immigration to Harlem. The university would not perceive Harlem to be a threat until the campus continued to expand and people of color lived closer to its growing footprint.² The subject of Columbia's anxiety regarding Harlem and Barnard's implication in its exploitation is not one I will delve fully into, and which merits its own thesis. Rather, I am interested in providing relevant background to proceeding episodes in Barnard/Columbia's history. Notions of respectable white femininity, students' agency in claiming space, and the centrality of housing continued to be fundamental in the ongoing negotiation between students, university administration, and

² Stefan M. Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University, Black Student Power in the Late 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 22.

neighbors.

This thesis is grounded in primary source research using the Barnard College Archives and Special Collections. I turn to the archive not as a neutral truth-teller, but as a contested site of institutional memory and historical absence. The Barnard Archives has a wealth of student-produced content, providing a lens into student attitudes towards their built and social environments. Above all, this thesis seeks to delineate the ways in which where and how students were living help us understand the shifting norms of Barnard students. Students asserted their vision for the college by advocating for more robust on-campus housing options, a greater system of self-governance, and alternative models of living. In doing so, they address notions of femininity, the threat of the changing city, and the outside's perception of the college and its students.

Building Barnard and Recovering Students' Femininity

*"Through the courtesy of Mrs. Meyer and Miss Walker, I was permitted to go all over Fiske Hall from cellar to top floor...and I found it just what its godmothers claimed it would be, an ideal home for the embryonic new woman."*³

Barnard College opened in the fall of 1889 with a capitalization of 10,000 dollars and 14 full-time students.⁴ Named after the recently deceased president of Columbia and longtime advocate for co-education, the college was housed at 343 Madison Avenue between 44th and 45th streets, 4 blocks away from Columbia's then campus.⁵ Outgrowing its site on 49th street, in 1891 the Columbia board of trustees approved a \$5 million purchase of part of the current site in

³ "Home and Social Life at Barnard." *New York Herald*, February 5, 1899, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC15-02:1#page/480/mode/1up/search/dormitory>.

⁴ Rosalind Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject: How the Women of Columbia Shaped the Way We Think About Sex and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 51.

⁵ Andrew Dolkart, *Morningside Heights: A History of its Architecture and Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 208.

Morningside Heights.⁶ If it was to maintain its affiliated relationship to Columbia, fiscally independent Barnard had to find adjacent property of its own closeby. Donations from prominent New York women facilitated the building of Barnard’s Morningside campus. Mary E. Brinkerhoff’s donation of 100,000 dollars in 1892 came with the condition that the campus would be built within 1,000 feet of Columbia.⁷ In 1895 Elizabeth Milbank Anderson donated 130,000 dollars for the construction of a building.⁸ Following Martha T. Fiske’s donation of 140,000 dollars in 1897, Rich designed Fiske, a building intended to house laboratory space. Charles A. Rich designed this trio of connected buildings on the 119th-120th blocks on Broadway—Barnard’s new home of buildings, Milbank, Brinckerhoff, and Fiske.⁹

The architecture of Barnard sheds light on what the founders envisioned as the relationship between the administration and students. Architect Rich designed a closed quad of buildings which was never completed, leaving the three buildings open facing south. While Rich mimicked the Beaux Arts style of Columbia’s design and used similar materials, it lacked the attention to form of Charles McKim’s designs for Columbia.¹⁰ As compared to the unified and conscientious designs of Bryn Mawr and other women’s colleges, Barnard’s lack of buildings for student life or gathering demonstrated its initial disregard for providing for or monitoring the social lives of its students. As Morningside Heights historian Andrew Dolkart has written, Barnard desperately sought to meet the “demands of intelligent and well-trained New York women for a college education. Its moving spirits had no thought of changing the consciousness

⁶ Rosalind Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject*, 84.

⁷ Dolkart, *Morningside Heights*, 210.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women’s Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 139. The group of buildings were collectively referred to as Milbank.

¹⁰ Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 142.

of young women and redirecting their lives...nor any desire to protect them from the dangers of higher education...”¹¹ The unremarkable nature of Barnard’s architecture reflects the early administration’s lack of interest in creating a unified and controlled social environment on campus for its primarily commuter student body.

As seen through extensive local press coverage, students and onlookers alike considered Barnard’s trio of buildings to be fashionable. The plans for the columned buildings’ interiors were meant to display wealth and grandness despite the building’s modest footprint and the college’s ongoing financial struggles.¹² The middle structure of the three, Milbank Hall, acted as the architectural centerpiece of the college. Dolkart describes the entrance

...through a vestibule articulated by columns of Mycenaean marble that form screens, breaking up the space and disguising its small dimension. The overscaled quality of a number of features in the vestibule, such as a shallow central dome that originally appeared to be supported by four massive cartouches and a huge spherical chandelier.¹³

Anderson commissioned Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company for a window leading to the library. The finely decorated Milbank and Brinckerhoff buildings were open for the inaugural classes on the Morningside campus in October of 1897.¹⁴ In 1898, the trustees instructed Rich to adjust the designs for Fiske to accommodate dormitory space. Rich hastily added windows along one wing.¹⁵

¹¹ Dolkart, *Morningside Heights*, 225.

¹² *Ibid.*, 215.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 216

Fiske Hall Dormitory Claremont Avenue and 120th Street 1898-1901

Fiske Hall served as Barnard's first and only on-campus dormitory from 1898 to 1901. The westernmost building with its back to Claremont, it accommodated a total of 60-65 students before it was reverted to its intended use as a laboratory space.¹⁶ The dormitory's symbolic value exceeded its practical impact, accommodating no more than 20% of any class. Although Barnard's first dormitory drew students from outside commuting distance, its prohibitive cost prevented many students from taking advantage of Fiske. Yet, as seen in news coverage, the dormitory represented a higher level of collegiate prestige and acted as a site of feminization for the college's onlooker.

The architecture and aesthetic of the new dormitory was central to establishing its credibility in the eyes of prospective students, parents, and the press. *The New York Times* covered the opening of Fiske Hall and described its interiors extensively. According to the author, Fiske rooms are "arranged with due regard to light and air, and are finished and furnished simply and in good taste. Most rooms command a splendid view of the river and the hills that is both restful and inspiring."¹⁷ Miss Susan Grimes Walker is listed as in "charge of the dormitory," along with descriptions of her father's employment as a Navy admiral, her educational background at Bryn Mawr College, and her "charming personability." The article positions the dormitory as different and superior to other nearby boarding options through its aesthetic tastefulness and Miss Walker's supervision. However, the dormitory was not a viable option for all students. *The New York Times* noted the great expense of living in Fiske: "The charges range from \$100 for a small single room, to be occupied by one girl, to \$350 for a share in a suite of

¹⁶ Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject*, 84.

¹⁷ "Barnard College" *The New York Times*, October 8, 1898, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1898/10/09/102124599.pdf>.

two chambers and study, to be occupied by two girls.”¹⁸ This meant room and board was 1 ½ to more than 2 times the cost of tuition at the time. While the rooms were expensive relative to other nearby housing options, wealthy students continued to desire permanent on-campus housing.

Barnard students exaggerated the geographic pull that the opening of Fiske Hall generated. The 1900 Barnard yearbook, *Mortarboard*, over-emphasized Fiske Hall’s effect on demographic shifts in the college’s matriculation. The 1900 edition introduces the Class of 1902, those who entered Barnard at the opening of the dormitory, with a reference to Fiske Hall. The Class of 1902, “...owing to the dormitory system at Barnard...consisting of forty-two members, has come from the four quarters of the country.”¹⁹ Students from outside the New York Metropolitan area had already attended Barnard and lived in nearby off-campus housing, outside the surveillance of the college. The hall’s prohibitive cost and small number of rooms limited the desired geographic diversity. Barnard administrative records show that the majority of those living in Fiske Hall were from New York State. During one of the three years it operated as a dormitory, 19 out of 52 residents were New Yorkers. The largest contributor by city/town was New York City with 8 students. The second largest was Brooklyn (then its own city), sending 5.

²⁰ During the period Fiske was open, Barnard had a total enrollment of 131 in 1889, growing to 269 by 1902.²¹ Although student publications emphasized the high demand and geographic diversity of Fiske, the numbers largely did not reflect this. Although Fiske accommodated an

¹⁸ "Barnard College" *The New York Times*, October 8, 1898, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1898/10/09/102124599.pdf>.

¹⁹ Barnard College, *The Mortarboard*, (New York, New York: 1902), 90, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:yearbook-1900#page/1/mode/2up>.

²⁰ "List of Fiske Students by State," 1897, Buildings and Grounds, BC 3: Box 4, Folder 22: Fiske Hall Bills, Barnard College Archives.

²¹ Robert McCaughey data sets.

increasingly small percentage of the student body, the dormitory's symbolic meaning outweighed its practical impact on the daily life and geographic makeup of the student body.

Fiske's prohibitive cost introduces the question of what the college's founders and early leaders envisioned as Barnard's intended student body. The college's founding coincided with a shift in the demographics and cultural landscape at women's colleges. Initially, most focused on educating middle class young women who needed to support themselves, prominent among them the daughters of academics and clergy.²² However, by the 1890s, women's colleges attracted students from families of wealth and social standing with no intention to work following graduation.²³ It seems as though Barnard was founded with the intention to principally provide classical education to people like their daughters—wealthy women destined for high society and family life. Annie Nathan Meyer, a leader in the fight for a classical women's college in New York City, wrote about her vision for Barnard before its opening as educating five different types of students: Young women taking advantage of the select Columbia courses open to women, children of parents nervous for them to leave the nest, students enrolled in correspondence courses, and those at the (tuition-free) "Normal College," which trained women for teaching positions. Of the latter student pool, Meyer was principally interested not in the students enrolled in the Normal College for financial reasons, but those who possessed the means to pay for a private college but lacked a suitable local institution: Barnard.²⁴ The founders and early leaders envisioned establishing Barnard as a space for the wealthier elite.

As Barnard and women's colleges in general catered more to women from wealthier families, they focused on creating a robust social life for their students. Though wealthy students

²² Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 147.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Annie Nathan Meyer, *The Nation*, June 6, 1886.

did not create “college life,” they did influence its nature. College administrators did not anticipate the growing prominence of clubs, drama productions, fraternities, and parties at institutions educating serious young women.²⁵ Lefkowitz Horowitz explains that “College life created a different standard, one that was secular, even hedonistic. It recognized different qualities for achievement. It offered a new system of rewards for success and punishment for offenders.”²⁶ The physical and temporal space residential life provided to create “college life” was a central element in fostering student investment in on-campus dormitories.

Virginia Gildersleeve, a graduate in 1899 and longtime dean of the college, described the increased emphasis on college life and its centrality in affirming Barnard’s similarity to other women’s colleges. She matriculated at Barnard during a pivotal time in the college’s attempt to define itself and its amorphous “college life.” As a senior, Gildersleeve penned a paper critiquing Barnard’s transition to catering to the wealthier and supposedly less studious demographic, less concerned with academics and more interested in having a good time. She wrote

It was not until the infinitely more attractive home on the heights made us resemble more nearly the average girl’s idea of what a college should be that we began to feel decidedly the influx of younger, pleasure-seeking element—in the main, that portion of it prevented by home ties from seeking the college experience at the attractive institutions outside the city.²⁷

Gildersleeve noted the changing demographics of the graduating classes even in her time as a student. She described a new student body confined to the city who still wanted the “pleasure”

²⁵ Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 148.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 149.

²⁷ Virginia C. Gildersleeve, “The Change in the Spirit of Barnard” (Undergraduate essay), 25 April 1899, Virginia C. Gildersleeve Collection, Columbia University, in *Early American Women: A Documentary History 1600-1900*, edited by Nancy Woloch (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), 467.

increasingly associated with “country colleges” like Bryn Mawr. In turn, Gildersleeve argued that fewer and fewer of these students would go on to teaching as compared to preceding classes.²⁸ According to the young Gildersleeve, the “college life” cultivated in the urban setting was done so through plays, recreational sports, dance classes, and fraternities. Gildersleeve lamented the focus diverted from academic study, asserting that the “average student is very apt, indeed to regard the mental work merely as the necessary but rather painful price which she must pay for the privilege of enjoying the other side of college life.”²⁹ Above all, Gildersleeve associated this change as an indicator that Barnard was “growing more like Bryn Mawr, Vassar, and her other sister colleges... The Barnard graduate of the years to come will, I think, go forth better fitted for the life the average woman leads than was the graduate of past years.”³⁰ On the whole, Gildersleeve criticized the increased emphasis on “pleasure-seeking.” However, she hesitantly acknowledged that “college life” may better prepare Barnard students for their futures, pointing to the broader society’s disregard for women’s classical education. Gildersleeve links the growth of extracurricular college activities, a wealthier (and younger) student body, and the college’s growing desire to model itself after its sister institutions. This was increasingly emphasized through the experiment of Fiske Hall and its intended influence over the student body.

Fiske Hall represented a new era for the college in the eyes of students and urban onlookers. A *New York Herald* article asserts that “With the completion and opening of Barnard’s Dormitory, Fiske Hall, a new phase of life opened for the girl collegians and the

²⁸ Virginia C. Gildersleeve, “The Change in the Spirit of Barnard,” 467.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 468.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

college became a college in every sense of the word.”³¹ The article went on to describe the opening of Fiske Hall as having filled a “void,” whose fulfillment was equated to Barnard’s comparability with other women’s colleges across the country. While Barnard did not truly fill the “void” of housing the majority of its students for many decades, Fiske marked the beginning of Barnard as a residential college.

The 1900 yearbook put together by Barnard juniors introduced the new dormitory through the eyes of the onlooker. This edition of *The Mortarboard* provides a carefully crafted description of life in Fiske Hall. It presented the hall through the perspective of “The stranger that approaches.”³² The students’ description of “Life in Fiske Hall” went on to explain that

He [the stranger] may think of the college girl as interested wholly in her studies. But one step within the cloistered door of Fiske reveals a place neither severe nor wholly academic, and gives a glimpse of the college girl as she really is... delighting in the jolly life...growing always more democratic and warm-hearted as she sees into experiences that have not been hers...³³

The stranger is described as a masculine observer of the college from the outside. The masculinized onlooker breaks down his misperceptions of women in higher education through observing the domestic life of students, at home in Fiske Hall. A glimpse into the dormitory also provides a “glimpse of the college girl as she really is:” “jolly,” “democratic,” and “warm-hearted.” The onlooker’s perception of the dormitory as warm and welcoming is equated

³¹“Home and Social Life at Barnard.” *New York Herald*, February 5, 1899, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC15-02:1#page/480/mode/1up/search/dormitory>.

³² Barnard College, *The Mortarboard*, (New York, New York: 1902), 90, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:yearbook-1900#page/1/mode/2up>

³³ Barnard College, *The Mortarboard*, (New York, New York: 1902), 72, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:yearbook-1900#page/1/mode/2up>.

to the student herself, placing the dormitory as a stand-in for viewing the woman in higher education.

As women's higher education continued to cope with a perceived loss of femininity, the Barnard dormitory acted as a site of feminized recuperation. *Herald* author wrote that the dormitory was an "ideal home for the embryonic new woman." The dormitory is therefore equated to a womb, a site of feminized care amplified by the author's descriptions of its "gay," "girlish atmosphere." An illustration accompanying the article depicts a Barnard student as a conventionally attractive, well-dressed, and feminine woman lounging on a chair while reading a book. A photo of a student's room is captioned "Chums Quarters." The infantilized, hyper-feminine descriptions challenged the author's and implied audience's expectations of the serious "mannish" women whose attractiveness had been soiled by classical academic study. The dormitory's feminized space of home assisted in recovering the white (largely wealthy) woman's femininity in her pursuit of higher education.

As we will see in proceeding negotiations over residential regulations, dormitory rules were intimately tied to maintaining respectable femininity. The first documented dormitory regulations at Barnard College were developed for Fiske in 1899. These regulations outlined specific controlling figures and entities. Discretion left to the Head of the House provided opportunities for negotiation by students. This unpublished document foreshadows lasting negotiations between students and administrators to address the gendered politics of higher education.

IR

The General Regulations of Fiske Hall.

(1.) Any student intending to be absent from the Hall over night, shall leave a card with the Head of the Hall, giving her name, her temporary address, the date, the ^{or} length of her absence.

(2.) The authority to control all matters of chaperonage shall be ^{vested} in the Head of the Hall.

(3.) All callers shall leave the Hall by ten o'clock.

(4.) Students are at liberty to receive gentlemen ~~only~~ in the following ^{rooms} of the alcoves, the reception room, and the private studies:
 Exception, A brother may be received in his sisters room, but no other students are to be present, and he shall not go to his sisters room unannounced.

(5.) The Hall shall be quiet after 10:30 P.M.

(6.) Magazines shall not be taken from the Students Parlor until they are a month old.

(7.) All magazines taken from the Students Parlor shall be registered in the book provided for that purpose, together with the name of the student taking the magazine.

(8.) The following residents of the Hall are recognized as general Hall chaperones;

Miss Walker,	Dr. Bunting,	Miss Cody,
Miss Metcalf.	Miss Furness,	Miss French,

Dated February 1899, the "General Regulations of Fiske Hall" was signed by Susan G. Walker.³⁴

BE

(1.) No Student shall go out in the evening alone; Except, going to and coming from the library etc., or in a cab.

(2.) Students shall not be out after ten o'clock P.M. without a chaperone or escort as provided.

(3.) Students shall not go out in the evening in groups with men, without a chaperone, or alone with a man without the approval of the Head of the House.

(4.) Students shall not go to places of public entertainment without a chaperone.

(5.) Graduate Students and Auditors, ^{with the approval of the Head of the House} may be considered as chaperoned ^{by} themselves.

(6.) The following persons in Fiske Hall may serve a chaperone for the Students.

Miss Walker.	Miss Bunting,	Miss French.
Mrs. Hosmer.	Miss Furness.	Miss Cody.
Miss Metcalf.		

Susan G. Walker
 February 1899.

³⁴ "General Regulations of Fiske Hall," February 1899, Residential Life and Housing, BC5.17: Box 1, Folder 1, Fiske Hall, Barnard College Archives.

Romantic Friendship and Its Imagined Home in a Permanent Dormitory

As the first on-campus dormitory, Fiske was also home to some of the first documented anxieties about students' social lives. Former Trustee Henrietta Talcott described Fiske as "a godless place." Trustee Augusta Arnold similarly lamented that there seemed to be "no limits to the hours that the girls could dance."³⁵ While there are few sources describing the residential culture at Fiske from students' perspectives, this "godless" description complicates the institutional narrative portraying the respectability of the hall. Even after Fiske closed, residential life, students' social lives, and concern over their mutual respectability (or lack thereof) continued to meaningful intersect. It also points to the relative freedom students found in their social lives, generally unattended to and unsupervised by the administration, despite any critical remarks. Barnard students took advantage of this freedom to cultivate strong relationships with fellow classmates. Students' rather uncontested claim to shaping an evolving student culture and investment in the ongoing negotiation over the campus' footprint intersected with the college's romantic friendships, or what historian Rona Wilk has called "crush culture."

In 1903, Edith Somborn '06 penned her first of two plays relating to residential life at Barnard. Entitled "Crushitis," the play depicted freshmen infatuations in a Barnard dormitory. The play was set in 1908, when Somborn predicted the opening of the college's permanent dormitory.³⁶ The college newspaper *The Barnard Bulletin* reported that "The plot consisted of the story of two very bad cases of what is commonly known as 'Freshman crushes,' and the means by which the Senior, the victim of these 'crushes' effectually cured them."³⁷ The play was

³⁵ Talcott and Arnold complaints about Fiske residents noted in George A. Plimpton to E.J. Smith, November 22, 1898, Plimpton Papers, Barnard College Archives.

³⁶ "Sophomore Entertainment," *The Barnard Bulletin*, December 14, 1903, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19031214-1>.

³⁷ Ibid.

“a sketch of undergraduate life, and contained many local jokes.” Although comically exaggerated, the *Bulletin* review effectively places the plot as normalized and relevant to Barnard students at the time. The play importantly links the “crush culture” to students’ efforts to secure on-campus housing, and the imagined future home of proceeding classes as well as their romantic friendships in an on-campus dormitory.

Homo-romantic and erotic relationships at Barnard were central to the college’s social and artistic culture at the turn of the twentieth century. Rona M. Wilk’s ““What’s a Crush? A Study of Crushes and Romantic Friendships at Barnard College, 1900-1920” tracks the evolution of fellow students’ relationships. Unlike other women’s colleges, Barnard was physically very close to an all-men’s institution. Wilk writes that “the crush flourished at Barnard, and not only at women’s colleges such as Vassar or Smith, suggesting that there is more to the crush than lack of an appropriate, *male* ‘outlet.’ Some women clearly felt they could carry out heterosexual relations while pursuing women romantically as well.”³⁸ Barnard’s lack of residential life likewise did not diminish the “crush culture.” The ways in which these crushes manifested were modified due to the largely commuter student body. As opposed to filling a crush’s hot water bottle before bed, students would offer invitations to the theater or tokens of affection like candy or flowers.³⁹

The “crush culture” at Barnard is well-documented in *The Barnard Bulletin*, yearbooks, and in archived student diaries. The Class of 1911’s satirized production of *Alice in Wonderland* included the lines:

Listen, Alice, we will tell you, you who are unversed
in college ways,
What this thing is, this affliction, that comes to us in

³⁸ Rona M. Wilk, ““What’s a Crush?”” 21.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Freshman days.
 Your [sic] so innocent, your so innocent
 That you cannot surmise
 What's a crush, what's a crush,
 Oh! What's a crush.

When your heart goes pitter-patter
 Just to meet Her on the stairs, When She smiles upon you kindly
 Tho to speak you do not dare
 When you jealously, when you jealously
 Look upon a rival claim
 That's a crush, that's a crush,
 Yes, that's a crush.⁴⁰

Wilk argues that romantic friendships and “crushes” were embedded into college culture through social hierarchies of under/upperclassmen relationships and often existed alongside acceptable heterosexual relationships. Prior to World War I and Freud’s influence in pathologizing sexuality, students and administrators saw these relationships as relatively benign until they crossed notions of respectable behavior. “Crushitis” was written as a response to “very bad cases” and the need to “cure” such debilitating crushes.

Most students, with the bulk of the student body living at home and Columbia College across the street, regularly socialized with men while participating in crush culture. Somborn, the author of “Crushitis” and “Barnadesia,” lived on Central Park West, which is at least suggestive of financial means. She wanted a dormitory not just for students with a long commute or from out of town, but presumably for students like her, living at home close to Barnard. “Crushitis” is a consolidation of two widely accepted cultural norms at Barnard during the beginning of the twentieth century: yearning for an on-campus dormitory and the overwhelming frenzy of a “crush.”

⁴⁰ Stella Bloch Hanau Scrapbook 1905-1911, Alum Scrapbooks, *The Barnard Archives*, 8, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC15-12:721>.

Enforcing Respectability Without a “Hall of Our Own”

“We have said many girls live at home. That is true, but there are also many girls who do not.

The question is often asked, ‘Why, where do they live?’”⁴¹

Whittier Hall 1230 Amsterdam Avenue 1902-1907

When the dormitory experiment in Fiske Hall closed in 1901, the editors of *The Barnard Bulletin* posed the question regarding students not living with their parents: “‘Why, where do they live?’”⁴² The answer would lead students to advocate for the social guidance on-campus housing provided. In the fall of 1902, the first academic year since 1898 without a dormitory, 35 students lived in the 6th and 7th floors of Whittier Hall,⁴³ Columbia’s Teachers College dormitory, while the rest lived in boarding houses or apartments near campus.⁴⁴ With no form of on-campus housing between 1902 and 1906, students refined their forms of self-government, attended student government conferences with other colleges, and pressed for an on-campus option.

The Barnard administration planned to accommodate those previously housed in Fiske Hall in Whittier, where (generally older) Teachers College students lived and which had been advertised in the *Bulletin* for several years. At the end of the 1902 academic year, the *Bulletin* printed the first published Dormitory Regulations for 1902-3. They were not much more than an announcement of application and housing procedure.⁴⁵ A flat rate was to be charged for rooms on

⁴¹ Letter from the Editor, *The Barnard Bulletin*, November 13, 1905, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19051113-2>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Laura Gill, “Report of the Dean,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 13, 1902, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19021013-1>. “Fiske Hall,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, April 28, 1902, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19020428-3>

⁴⁴ “The Barnard Undergraduate Association,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 6, 1902, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19021006-3>.

⁴⁵ “Dormitory Regulations for 1902-1903,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, May 5, 1902, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19020505-1>.

all floors except the 2nd and 8th; students would only be rented rooms if they ate in the building's dining room; and students were not allowed to play musical instruments if it interfered with academic studies.⁴⁶ The most notable regulation was that all students not living in Whittier Hall or with their parents had to seek permission with the Dean. However, students seemed to secure her permission easily, given the diversity of acceptable off-campus housing options at the time. In 1905, a faculty member took up residence on the 7th floor of Whittier, which was dominated by Barnard students, though no supervisory rules were specified.⁴⁷ While unclear, it is likely that a faculty member or similarly older woman was present in Whittier Hall from the beginning, either hired by Barnard or Teachers College. There is little documented administrative supervision of the Barnard students living in Whittier Hall. Yet in their first month of living there, they formed the college's first system of *residential* self-governance.⁴⁸ A few months later, the Whittier Hall Association adopted a constitution which outlined leadership structure. In 1903, Barnard students' section of Whittier Hall formed a social club. They sought to create a sense of community for the undergraduates living there, as one of them wrote, "so that we may stand for something in the dormitory and in the eyes of strangers who come from outside to visit us."⁴⁹ 34 current students as well as several alumnae and faculty made up the club. Despite their efforts to create a sense of community responsibility and watchfulness, students and alumnae were

⁴⁶ "Dormitory Regulations for 1902-1903," *The Barnard Bulletin*, May 5, 1902, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19020505-1>.

⁴⁷ "The Barnard Club in Whittier Hall," *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 2, 1905, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19051002>.

⁴⁸ "Dormitory Notes," *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 7, 1902, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19021027-1>.

⁴⁹ "The Barnard Club of Whittier Hall," *The Barnard Bulletin*, January 18, 1904, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19040118-1>.

increasingly concerned about the lack of social control on the part of the college as well as the outside world's perception of the students living there.

Self-governance at Barnard College

“An experiment which makes girls their own law-makers, judges, and policemen is bound to be an interesting one, and self-government furnishes much food for reflection. The problems of college conduct and college discipline are full of perplexities. Self-government does not solve them; it simply shifts them. The students instead of the faculty have the settling of them.”⁵⁰

The closure of the dormitory in Fiske Hall marked the beginning of student and alumnae's fight to increase Barnard's on-campus housing. This effort coincided with the rise of self-governance at women's colleges and gatherings of young people in higher education from across the country in the first student government conferences. As Barnard students learned more about how other students at women's colleges lived, they sharpened their vision for the future of Barnard's social climate and governance structure, closely tied to their desired physical layout of the college. Newspaper articles and residential guidelines regarding self-governance are instructive to understand the developing notions of womanhood at Barnard, at the time an intensely urban institution with a shaky claim to respectable womanhood. The process of developing and upholding systems of self-governance demonstrated students' investment in appearing as normative, society women, anxious to differentiate themselves from the tens of thousands of other single women living alone in New York City.

⁵⁰ Alice K. Fallows, “Self Government for College Girls,” *Harper's Bazaar* 38, 1904, 700.

Students formed the first student government in 1892, when the college was still housed on Madison Avenue. Their expressed goal was to establish an “authoritative body that should represent the opinion of the members of Barnard College upon matters affecting them as a whole and pertaining in most part to the Barnard’s relation with the outside world.”⁵¹ From the beginning of self-governance at Barnard, students were invested in cultivating a respectable outward-facing appearance and distinct Barnard culture. During a period in which Barnard lacked any on-campus dormitory, self-governance, along with clubs, fraternities, and other emerging extracurricular traditions were seen as central to creating a sense of cultural unity within the college.⁵² As the Barnard administration demonstrated little interest in monitoring the social affairs of students, the Association soon saw the value of expanding their purview to include self-governance. This monitoring manifested in the establishment of a “committee that looked after prompt attendance in the classes and reported if any student fell below a certain standard of scholarship...The powers of the committee... were increased until they embraced the oversight of all matters pertaining to college routine.”⁵³ The early form of self-governance meaningfully links the college’s outward-facing respectable image, surveillance over peers, and the unification of the student body.

Student government’s increasingly important role at Barnard can be seen in the college’s participation in Student Government Conferences. The first conference a Barnard delegation attended was in December of 1904 at Wellesley College, with 11 participating women’s

⁵¹“The Barnard Undergraduate Association,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 6, 1902, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19021006-3>.

⁵² Louise E. Peters, “Editor’s Letter, *The Barnard Bulletin*, March 7, 1904, *Barnard Archives*, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19040307-2>

⁵³“The Barnard Undergraduate Association,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 6, 1902, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19021006-3>.

colleges.⁵⁴ *The Barnard Bulletin* reported that Barnard was the only school represented without a dormitory. This fact, along with its urban campus, were cited as Barnard's "unique...problems." The author praises the college's "faculty restraint" as well as a "discreet and rational use of student liberty" in their self-governance system regarding all non-academic matters.⁵⁵ From the view of the first conference, Barnard students seemed to relish the relative freedom they were afforded as compared to other women's colleges. Students were also interested in the state of the college's self-governance system relative to others. The *Bulletin* published a comparison of the different self-governance structures following the 1906 Student Government Conference.⁵⁶ The author of the report emphasized students' individual responsibility to maintain the administration's hands-off approach to non-academic concerns. Early conferences exposed Barnard students to life at other institutions and influenced their vision for the college.

In the year following the closure of Fiske Hall, the *Bulletin* published a segment of the newly installed Dean Gill's year-end report, which argued "The dormitory is essential as a safeguard to the health and social ideals of the increasing number of students from a distance, who are eager to share in the University privileges."⁵⁷ Students increasingly felt that Whittier Hall was not a sufficient replacement for an on-campus dormitory. As 90% of residents were Teachers College students, the remaining 10% were undergraduates. This ratio and structure meant it "cannot be run like a college dormitory."⁵⁸ This begs the question of what constitutes a

⁵⁴ "Student Government Conference," *The Barnard Bulletin*, December 12, 1904, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19041212-1>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ "Comparison of Self-Government Associations," *The Barnard Bulletin*, January 22, 1906, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19060122-1>

⁵⁷ Laura Gill, "Report of the Dean," *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 19, 1903, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19031019-2>

⁵⁸ Edith Somborn, "Editor's Letter," *The Barnard Bulletin*, November 13, 1905, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19051113-2>

“college dormitory” at the time. Whittier Hall was not considered one in its ratio of college students, lack of regulations, and minimal connection to the college administration. As the college continued to be unsuccessful in securing an on-campus dormitory, Barnard students took up the fight for a residential college. *Bulletin* editor Louise Peters wrote

If, however as a contemporary magazine referring to this lack of dormitory advantages at Barnard, says ‘the students are principally mature women who can afford to forgo the social intercourse which plays a large part in shaping the ideals of the college woman elsewhere,’ no more need to be said. But we know that this is not so. The mature woman is, here as in other colleges, distinctly the exception, and the social intercourse and common ideals which accompany dormitory life we can no longer afford to forgo.⁵⁹

Barnard students, especially as they learned more about life at other colleges, took the matter of social and residential control into their own hands.

Self-governance became an increasingly important tool for women’s colleges in monitoring students’ lives. While Barnard from its founding appeared less interested in tracking the social lives of its students, other women’s colleges early on traded administratively-imposed rules for student enforcement.⁶⁰ Bryn Mawr, an institution heavily invested in the social lives of its students, is notably credited with popularizing principles of self-government. In 1904, *Harper’s Bazaar* published “Self-Government for College Girls,” an article detailing the new trend of self-governance as a defining element of life at women’s colleges. Author Alice K. Fallows writes that “With its power of making rules, of carrying them out, and of inflicting penalties, the association assumes the burden of keeping members in the strait and narrow way.”

⁵⁹ Louise E. Peters, “Editor’s Letter,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 12, 1903, The Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19031012-2>

⁶⁰ Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 149.

⁶¹ Students adopted new roles, in “an experiment which makes girls their own law-makers, judges, and policemen.”⁶² At Wellesley, freshmen who lived off-campus were feared to be inadequately adjusting to the rules and regulations set by the student government association. College administrations also discovered that students set severer punishments for their peers than the faculty. For Bryn Mawr and Wellesley, self-government was “a corrective for an overabundance of rules,”⁶³ which Barnard had not experienced. It is all the more notable then, that Barnard students took upon the work of monitoring themselves.

Self-governance became an ongoing negotiation between students and the administration, with both bodies central to its success. While some Barnard students claimed responsibility for self-governance, not all were invested in the self-imposed rules. At the beginning of every academic year, self-governance policies set by the Undergraduate Association were read and according to some, “straightaway forgotten, and completely disregarded by the entire student body.”⁶⁴ The *Bulletin* chastised fellow students for failing to uphold and enforce such rules as maintaining quiet in the Reading Room. The author surmised that this may be because “no girl cares to undertake the duties of policeman, forgetting that such work would be done in a purely official and not a personal capacity.”⁶⁵ Seemingly inconsequential rules were seen as central to upholding self-governance. The author insisted that Barnard students must prove themselves active so-called policemen to “re-assure those in high places and to remove their very evident

⁶¹ Alice K. Fallows, “Self Government for College Girls,” 699.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 700.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 705.

⁶⁴ “The Barnard Undergraduate Association,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 6, 1902, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19021006-3>.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

doubt that Barnard is really capable of self-government.”⁶⁶ If students failed to adequately police those around them, students believed that the Barnard administration would assume authority over non-academic matters. This however, seems unlikely when looking to colleges like Bryn Mawr, whose student government association was charged with taking up the administration’s extensive framework of rules which Barnard historically did not have. Self-governance was unstable as cultural norms, students’ eagerness to police one another, and the administration’s interest in college life changed.

As seen in the Whittier Hall Association’s system of self-governance and the rise of student government, surveillance over peers was intimately linked to the growing residential life at Barnard. However, as long as the college lacked an on-campus dormitory, students and alumnae alike felt the absence of administrative guidance. Their response was to fundraise and apply administrative pressure to secure a “Temporary dormitory.”

College Control Over “The Complex Conditions of City Life”

Marimpol Court 515 W 122nd Street 1906

While other women’s colleges traded strict administrative policies for systems of self-governance, Barnard students imposed monitoring over peers to compensate for the perceived lack of administrative surveillance. In the urban context of New York City, this was especially crucial for achieving Barnard’s respectability. While Whittier Hall offered students an opportunity to live with fellow undergraduates, students and alumnae wanted an on-campus residence hall. As seen in undergraduate and residential government associations, students had already created substantial systems of rule enforcement. However, some students and alumnae

⁶⁶ “The Barnard Undergraduate Association,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 6, 1902, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19021006-3>.

argued that these systems were insufficient. In the fall of 1902, as construction was underway for the permanent Brooks Hall, Anne Carrol '07, a resident of Whittier Hall, wrote a letter to the editor arguing for the need for a dormitory:

This is the third year which I have spent at Whittier Hall, and I feel the need of a dormitory under *college control* for the benefit of young girls who want to come to Barnard from homes some distance from New York City. Whittier Hall provides a very pleasant and profitable home for girls who are capable of practically entire independence and decision on all matters of social conventionality and friendship; but Freshmen, young girls from out-of-town, although wisely and carefully instructed at home, cannot have had the experience necessary for adjusting themselves easily to the complex conditions of city life, without the matronage that is entirely unnecessary for more advanced students.⁶⁷

Carrol asserted that students needed the “*college control*” which would only come with the supervision of an on-campus dormitory. While Whittier’s accommodations provided the necessary physical comforts, Caroll argued the lack of college oversight did not prepare students for “the complex conditions of city life.” This begs the question then, what were the complex conditions of city life that Barnard students wanted to seek shelter from?

Barnard community members perceived the on-campus dormitory to be central to shaping the future of Barnard and the proper protection of its students. Turn of the twentieth century New York City’s vast increase in immigration, public high school graduation rate, and slightly expanded accessibility to higher education created a new and unexpected Barnard applicant pool. While the founders of Barnard intended the college to educate the city’s elite

⁶⁷ “Marimpol Court- The Barnard Dormitory,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 8, 1906, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19061008-1>.

daughters living at home on the wealthy East Side, the administration found itself with applicants from immigrant neighborhoods, largely consisting of first generation Eastern European Jews, Irish, and German women.⁶⁸ The 1896 reorganization of public high schools (some co-educational) across New York enabled children of European immigrants without the immediate financial need to start working to enroll in high school. Robert McCaughey cites several integral shifts in university policy and higher education which further broke down barriers for those of lower class, non-Protestant European-descent's entrance to Barnard. In addition to a broader demographic able to seek public high school education, Barnard, reluctantly following Columbia's lead, abandoned Greek as a requirement for entrance. This change in educational requirements was part of a shift central to the identity of the college. Founded as an institution of classical higher education, changing the classical entrance requirements opened Barnard to more students beyond the Protestant and Episcopalian wealthy young women able to seek private tutors.

As the city saw an increase in Catholic and Jewish immigrants, Barnard's student body did as well. College entrance exams began to be administered through an independent body, the College Board, and newly established Regents Exams in public high schools were recognized as grounds for college admittance.⁶⁹ In a 1901 report, Dean Gill writes:

Until we erect a permanent dormitory to take the place of Fiske Hall, which will hereafter be required for academic purposes, we shall expect a slight decrease of patronage from a distance. The effect of this upon college life will be most detrimental, as a wider horizon is given every student by the diversity of experience possessed by her associates. We

⁶⁸ Robert McCaughey, *Gotham Sister: A History of Barnard College, Columbia University in the City of New York*, (Columbia University Press: In Press).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

must develop a dormitory system, and draw students from a distance in order to make impossible the most unlovely form of provincialism, the provincialism of a great city.⁷⁰

As the composition of the inhabitants and landscape of New York changed, the “provincialism” that Dean Gill cautioned against meant increasingly lower-class children of Catholic and Jewish immigrants. This can be seen in her call for a “diversity of experience possessed by her associates,” which could easily have been obtained by reaching a wide scope in the city. Instead, she calls for the increase of “patronage from a distance.” Dean Gill notably locates the solution to “the provincialism of a great city” through establishing a permanent dormitory. The establishment of a dormitory was part of an effort to limit the matriculation of commuter students, most notably middle and working-class Jews.

This was not the first time the preoccupation over the “Hebrew question” had intersected with housing. In a 1906 letter, the college bursar, N.W. Liggett, voiced her concern over the high matriculation of Jewish students and the possible funding of a new dormitory by Jewish philanthropists the Guggenheims. She writes

a dormitory which will receive any number of Hebrews from all parts of the country as resident students, will do us incalculable harm. Already Hebrews are coming to us from other sections of the country. They are not from good Jewish families.... A gift of a dormitory building from a Hebrew would be the most embarrassing gift that could come to us... Every year we are drawing less and less from the private school element, and from the well-to-do classes. Much of the material which we graduate we cannot place advantageously, where we can ever expect any return, for while their minds are trained,

⁷⁰ Sadie F. Nones, “Editor’s Letter,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 13, 1902, The Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19021013-2>

the social limitation and environment is such that only the public school is available, and we already have too much of this sort of material coming to us.⁷¹

This letter connects Liggett's anti-Semitism and class bias against what she saw as an increasingly Jewish and working class student body.

It is possible that in reading Dean Gill's call for overhauling the college's "provincialism," students understood the report's anti-semitic undertones. Regardless of whether they read this subtext, some non-Jewish students were active in upholding and furthering the anti-Semitic culture at Barnard. This can be seen in the college fraternities' exclusion of Jewish students for over two decades. The anti-Semitic policies were only upended when students campaigned for the abolishment of fraternities, which was successful in the fall of 1913.⁷²

Whether or not students made the connection between limiting "provincialism" with anti-Semitism at Barnard, expanding on-campus housing options and the continued exclusion of Jewish students from social spaces on campus went hand in hand.

As students grew increasingly unsatisfied with the housing options provided by the administration, alumnae and students took matters into their own hands. While a permanent hall was in the process of being built on 116th Street, the Alumnae Association began to fundraise for a Temporary Dormitory. Barnard students Edith Somborn '06 and Blanche Marks '06 wrote and produced a "comic operetta" to help fundraise. In a 1973 letter to then President Peterson, Somborn reflects "...one of the most difficult features for out-of-town students was the necessity of making long journeys daily, to and fro- or moving into one of the unattractive houses on

⁷¹ Bursar N.W. Liggett to George A. Plimpton, June 20, 1906, Plimpton Papers, Barnard Archives.

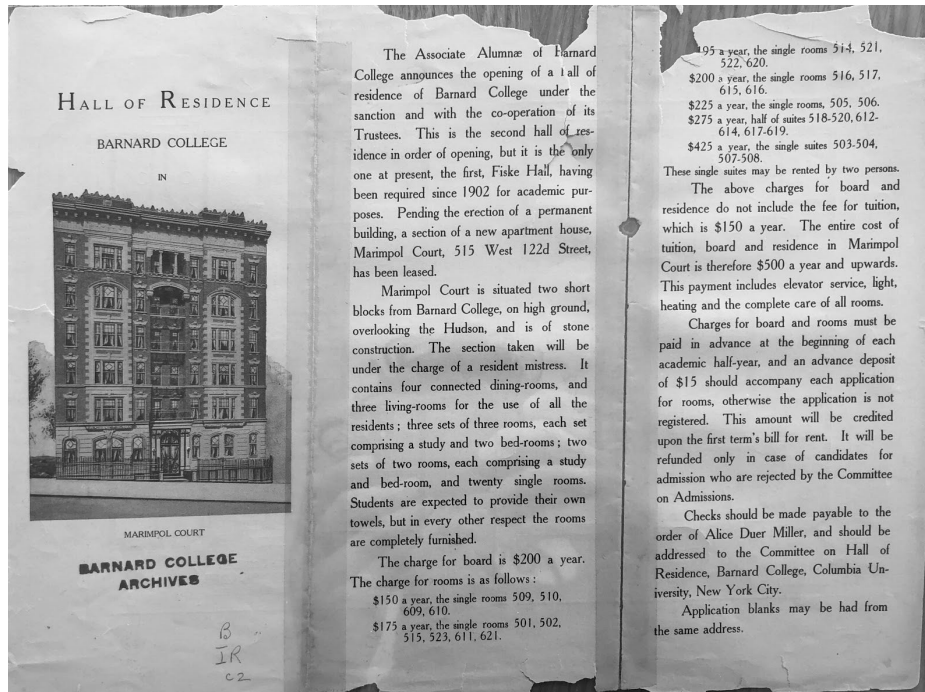
⁷² Robert McCaughey, *Gotham Sister* (Columbia University Press: In Press).

Amsterdam Avenue...I decided that we would do something about it.”⁷³ “Barnedesia” was organized and performed several times to raise money for the temporary dormitory, which had the support of students and was organized by the Alumnae Association.

The Alumnae Association first involved itself in the residential lives of its students through the Temporary Dormitory housed in the top two floors of the Marimpol, a newly opened six-story building at 515 West 122nd Street. The 1906 brochure announced its opening “under the sanction and with the cooperation of the Trustees.”⁷⁴ The dormitory space boasted four dining rooms and three living rooms, along with a combination of suites and single rooms. In 1906, 419 students attended the college. The Marimpol plans accommodated 33 students, which hardly made a dent in the vision for a more residential college.

⁷³ Letter, Mrs. Stanley M. Isaacs to President Martha Peterson, March 5, 1973, Edith Somborn Isaacs Scrapbook, 1903-1906, page 84, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC15-06:227#page/1/mode/2up>

⁷⁴ “Hall of Residence in Barnard College: Marimpol Court,” 1906, Student Life Handbooks and Residence Guides, BC 11.1, Box 1, Folder 1: Marimpol Court, Barnard Archives.



This Marimpol Court brochure was meant to solicit applications. Residential Guidelines were printed in The Barnard Bulletin.⁷⁵

A small proportion of the students who wished they could live on-campus, and not with family, in boarding houses, or apartments, could hope to live in the newly leased apartments at the Marimpol. The Marimpol cost 150-175 dollars for room and 200 dollars for board annually. The total of room and board could total several times more than the annual fees for Barnard at the time. It was similarly, if not more expensive than boarding at Whittier Hall.⁷⁶ As evidenced by its costliness, Marimpol Court was not an effort to house lower-income Barnard students making long commutes from the outer boroughs. Rather, it was another instance of attempting to attract wealthy students from outside commuter-distance.

⁷⁵ "Hall of Residence in Barnard College: Marimpol Court," 1906, Student Housing Handbooks and Residence Guides 1906-1959, BC 11.1: Box 1, Folder 1: Marimpol Court, Barnard Archives.

⁷⁶ Marjorie Ferguson Brown, "Editor's Letter," *The Barnard Bulletin*, May 9, 1906, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19060509-2>.

Marimpol Court is an example of Barnard students and alumnae's growing influence over the geographic scope and cultural norms of the college. In addition to organizing fundraisers in support of the Temporary Dormitory, students used *The Barnard Bulletin* to give voice to their interest in Marimpol and to determine the number of rooms for the Alumnae Association to rent.

⁷⁷ Students and alumnae assumed much of the authority over the Temporary Dormitory, which the college would later adopt. The hall was differentiated from Whittier through its undergraduate-only population and increased supervision. Concern about the projected control over non-academic life was voiced by some. An announcement regarding Marimpol in the *Bulletin* expressed the

...feeling that those living in the dormitory will be under certain rules and regulations which might be unpleasant. The idea at present in the minds of the authorities is to have self-government among the resident students. There will be only such restrictions as ought to exist in any girls' college, with as much freedom could properly be granted.⁷⁸

Self-government again surfaced as the means by which surveillance was imposed, made more palatable, and in emulation of other women's colleges.

In the fall of 1906, approximately 30 students lived in Marimpol, and "...the foundations of real dormitory life, we feel, have been laid in the life of the temporary dormitory."⁷⁹ As the first permanent dormitory, Brooks Hall, began construction, Marimpol established the Barnard dormitory culture soon to have a permanent home on 116th Street. The "real" dormitory life was

⁷⁷ "Applicants to the Temporary Dormitory," *The Barnard Bulletin*, May 2, 1906, The Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19060502-2>.

⁷⁸ Marjorie Ferguson Brown, "Editor's Letter," *The Barnard Bulletin*, May 9, 1906, Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19060509-2>.

⁷⁹ "Marimpol Court- The Barnard Dormitory," *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 8, 1906, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19061008-1>.

purportedly manifested through “cheerful and attractive” furnishing, Miss Buckingham as “the matron in charge,” and the system of self-government. In the development of permanent dormitory life at Brooks, it is instructive to look to Marimpol Court and the ways in which students and alumnae were integral to shaping residential life at Barnard College.

Brooks Hall 116th and Broadway 1906-Present

Under threat from speculative developers, Barnard secured three blocks between Claremont and Broadway from 116th to 119th Streets in 1903.⁸⁰ Through two donations by Mrs. Anderson, the college began construction on the long awaited dormitory in 1906. A 1907 brochure eliciting applications described the architecture as “of red overburned brick, Indiana limestone, terra cotta, after the style of architecture of Henry II.”⁸¹ The hall had all the accoutrements of an exclusive hotel, including high ceilings, hot and cold running water, and full-linen service. The style of the dormitory was akin to the burgeoning urban apartment houses, with interiors similar to the city’s women’s clubs.⁸² As the administration worked to make Barnard more like its country college sisters in part through its elegant living quarters, Brooks’ high rates and fine interiors were meant to attract wealthy students from outside the city.⁸³ Although Brooks did not produce the geographic diversity the administration desired, it did guarantee those living on-campus would do so with all the accoutrements of the wealthy.

⁸⁰ Dolkart, *Morningside Heights*, 218.

⁸¹ “Brooks Hall: Revised Announcement Regarding Residence,” 1907, Student Life Handbooks and Residence Guides, BC 11.1, Box 1, Folder 2: Brooks Hall, Barnard Archives.

⁸² Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 251.

⁸³ *Ibid.*



A 1911 Mortarboard graphic depicts the “Brooks Dormitoria” as “A hot house species of the out of town family” in need of “delicate attention... kept from view in the evenings, night air being considered injurious.”⁸⁴

The opening of Brooks sought to put Barnard amongst elite collegiate company. During the cornerstone laying, then Columbia President Butler addressed the crowd, “emphasizing the great importance of dormitory life in accomplishing the aim of education, the development of noble character.”⁸⁵ Administrative supervision and socializing in Brooks were to be part of this

⁸⁴ Barnard College, *The Mortarboard*, (New York, New York: 1911), 126, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/object/yearbook-1911/mortarboard-1911#page/2/mode/2up>

⁸⁵ “The New Dormitory,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, November 14, 1906, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19061114-1>

“development of noble character.” Prior to the opening, the *Bulletin* wrote “During the first two years at college the dormitory was only a ‘castle in the air’; last year it was a ‘castle’ on paper; and this year it is an actually dormitory of brick and mortar.”⁸⁶ The “castle” that was Brooks, like all of the preceding Barnard-affiliated housing, was expensive. Rooms ranged from \$140-600 for the academic year, with board of \$225.⁸⁷ The prohibitive cost was not entirely lost on the administration, and 6 residential scholarships for \$50 were offered in the first year. These minimal scholarships did not enable those partially or fully supporting themselves through Barnard to live in the dorms, keeping most middle and lower class New Yorker students living at home. On September 23, 1907, Brooks Hall opened, with only 60 out of its 90 rooms occupied.⁸⁸

Brooks established an extensive system of self and administrative governance. Students elected a Hall Committee of five Brooks residents representing their respective floors. The Chairman of the Committee was part of the Hall Council, along with the hall mistress and a college officer appointed by Dean Gill.⁸⁹ Students and administrators were concerned about “How would they reconcile the desired freedom with the need of great discretion?”⁹⁰ The *Bulletin* reported that the Council “decided that it would be better to let the girls deprive themselves of a few pleasures than risk the good name of the Hall, for they realized how speedily

⁸⁶ “Marimpol Court- The Barnard Dormitory,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 8, 1906, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19061008-1>.

⁸⁷ “Brooks Hall: Revised Announcement Regarding Residence,” 1907, Student Life Handbooks and Residence Guides, BC 11.1, Box 1, Folder 2: Brooks Hall, Barnard Archives.

⁸⁸ Dorothea Eltzner, “Editor’s Letter,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, June 12, 1907, The Barnard Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19070612-2>

⁸⁹ “Brooks Hall,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, September 25, 1907, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19070925-4>

⁹⁰ “Self-Government at Brooks Hall,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 16, 1907, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19071016-1>

the world raises its eyebrows and shrugs at women communities.”⁹¹ The Hall Council created a list of regulations subject to amendment:

- No undergraduate shall go to the theatre at night unchaperoned
- No resident of Brooks Hall shall go to the supper after theatre
- No resident of Brooks Hall shall go to the library alone at night
- Any resident of Brooks Hall going to the library shall be home at 10:30
- Callers shall leave by 10:30.⁹²

The regulations and response are notable in that students were not accustomed to such a level of supervision, but accepted it for the “good name of the Hall.” Notably, the fact that “callers” were required to leave by 10:30 implies men were allowed to enter and entertain in the dormitory, with no specific reference to whether this occurred in bedrooms or living spaces. The *Bulletin* article also reflects the students’ awareness of the precarious public perception of their “all women communities.” Brooks ushered in a new era of supervision over the lives of the select residential students.

Spatial Conflicts and Alternative Living in the Cooperative Dormitory

99 Claremont Avenue and Broadview Dormitory 606 West 116th Street 1916-1919

In May of 1916, then Dean Gildersleeve (appointed in 1911) wrote to George Plimpton, longtime benefactor and administrator at Barnard, to request 250,000 dollars to build a wing of more affordable rooms attached to Brooks Hall, which at the time was at capacity. She explained that the Alumnae Association was working to open and manage a cooperative apartment for

⁹¹ “Self-Government at Brooks Hall,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 16, 1907, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19071016-1>

⁹² Ibid.

those unable to afford the at a minimum 365 dollars room and board cost of Brooks.⁹³ She preferred that the college open a wing attached to Brooks to accommodate the

...good many Barnard students now living alone in cheap lodging in the neighborhood of the college, unable to get into Brooks Hall, our dormitory, either because it is too expensive or it is full. These girls are not properly cared for. Their health is often injured by the poor meals which they buy in cheap restaurants, by their carelessness in providing food for themselves, and by loneliness. The college should certainly furnish better accommodations for this class of young women, for many of them are excellent and desirable students.⁹⁴

When the Alumnae Association came to the Dean with plans of a cooperative dormitory, Gildersleeve launched an inquiry into the nature of students who were in need of such housing. She wrote about several in her letter to Plimpton. She describes one low-income student on state scholarship from Schenectady, New York, who had to take out loans to board in the city. Another student whose father died and mother was ill lived “in a very cheap room, earned her lunch at college by waiting in our lunch room, and cooked her other meals over a gas jet. We found that she was becoming run down in health and wretched from insufficient nourishment and from loneliness.”⁹⁵ These concerns were part of a broader moral panic over an increase in unaccompanied women living and creating their own, unsupervised lives in New York City.

Margaret Mead’s 1972 autobiography, *Blackberry Winter*, provides a personal account of the sexual politics and social dynamics of cooperative living at the college. There are few known

⁹³ Letter, Dean Virginia Gildersleeve to George Plimpton, May 31, 1916, Administrative offices, Dean’s Office, 1894-1952, BC5.1, Box 26, Folder 3, Barnard College Archives.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

primary sources dealing with the distinct culture of the cooperative apartments. Anthropologist Mead matriculated at Barnard in 1920 after transferring from DePauw College. She recounts being a student at Barnard in the early 1920s and “During that first year, the sixteen-year-old daughter of a friend of my mother’s was found in bed with a boarder and was forced by her mother to get married.”⁹⁶ The sexual and moral politics of the home became increasingly fraught as the city’s spatial relations and attitudes towards sexuality changed. The administration increasingly saw housing Barnard students as an imperative.

As middle and lower income students became more populous at Barnard, housing them was central to incorporating them into the college and enforcing respectable morality which was perceived to be under threat in nearby apartments houses. Students interested in living accommodations besides Brooks or apartments houses were largely commuters and those formerly living in Whittier Hall. In the 1915-1916 academic year, Barnard had 694 students, 560 of them from New York State.⁹⁷ Of those listed as possible residents for the proposed apartment, half commuted from Brooklyn. The rest, except one from South Carolina, were residents of Whittier Hall with homes in New York State.

⁹⁶ Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1972), 103.

⁹⁷ “Barnard College Statistics for the Report of the Registrar of Columbia University for the Year 1915-1916,” Administrative offices, Dean’s Office, 1894-1952, BC5.1, Box 26, Folder 14.

BARNARD COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK

POSSIBLE RESIDENTS FOR COOPERATIVE HOUSE

Archibald Leone	Freshman	Living at Whittier - Manhattanville N.Y.
Bausch Helene	Sophomore	See Avenue Brooklyn
Franklin Adele	Sophomore	Lives far out in Brooklyn Kenmore St.
Jennings Ruth	Junior	McDonough St. Brooklyn N.Y.
Mackey Marguerite	Sophomore	White N.Y.
Martens Charlotte	Junior	Lives at Whittier Stone Oak (Dunkirk) N.Y.
Neuville Edna	Freshman	Lives at Whittier - Schenectady N.Y.
Reid Ada	Junior	Lives way out in Brooklyn - 74 Street
Salzman Evelyn	Sophomore	Lives way out in Brooklyn - 12 Avenue
Sluth Elizabeth	Sophomore	East 8 Street Brooklyn
Tiffany Harriet	Sophomore	Barrytown N.Y.
Washburn Marion	Sophomore	Janytown N.Y.
Wobber Frieda	Sophomore	Broadway Brooklyn
Sobel Ali	Freshman	Hagermanville Rome
Cunow Dorothea + Eleanore	Junior + Senior	4 N.E.T. Brooklyn
Hague Frances	Sophomore	Columbus South Carolina

*Notes from the initial search into those interested in the Cooperative dormitory.*⁹⁸

There was a precedent for the Alumnae Association to intervene in the residential concerns of the student body, as seen through Marimpol Court. Its second initiative, the Cooperative, was opened in the fall of 1916 at 99 Claremont Avenue.⁹⁹ To minimize cost, housework was divided between the resident students and the housekeeper who cooked for the group. Board was \$7.25 per week, or \$29 per month, as compared to Brooks' annual board of \$225 and rent of \$140-445.¹⁰⁰ Barnard geology professor Dr. Ida Ogilvie was appointed

⁹⁸ "Possible Residents for Cooperative House," Administrative offices, 5: Dean's Office, 1894-1952, BC5.1: Box 26, Folder 10.

⁹⁹ "The Alumnae Cooperative Dormitory," *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 5, 1916, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19161005-1>.

¹⁰⁰ "The Alumnae Luncheon," *The Bulletin of the Associate Alumnae of Barnard College*, June 1917, The Barnard College Archive, 9. <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC11-08:231#page/8/mode/2up>.

“supervisor in general” over the dormitory and the administration instructed students to develop a system of self-governance.¹⁰¹ In the first year of the cooperative dormitory, 50 students applied, of which 29 were rejected, 6 placed on the waiting list because they were from the City, and the maximum 15 students was accepted. The experiment in cooperative style living with these 15 students at 99 Claremont Avenue grew throughout the late teens. By May of 1918, the alumnae donated sufficient funds to expand the dormitory to 40 students.¹⁰² That fall, 45 students were living in 6 cooperative apartments in 606 West 116th Street, known as the “Broadview Dormitory.”¹⁰³ In the 1918-1919 academic year, 23 students from out of state lived in the Cooperative dorm, 10 of these from New Jersey. Eighteen students were on scholarship. The intended lower-income nature of the group under alumnae-management created a culture distinct from other iterations of Barnard-affiliated dormitories. The cooperative model continued to grow throughout the latter half of the 1910s.

The rise of the cooperative model of renting private apartments aligned with the housing crisis in New York City. 1916 saw the end of a boom of housing development and vacancy rate at an unusually low 5.6%.¹⁰⁴ Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx had been transformed, with 40% of all apartments in the city built after 1903. The low rent and high vacancy rates pushed many owners to foreclosure. However, in early 1917, vacancies were down and landlords began to raise rents. By the end of World War I, New York City’s housing was in short supply and rent

“Barnard College Brooks Hall 1913-1914 Announcement Regarding Residence,” 1913, Student Housing Handbooks and Residence Guides 1906-1959, BC 11.1, Box 1, Folder 5: Brooks Hall, Barnard Archives.

¹⁰¹ “The New Dormitory,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 19, 1916, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19161019-2>.

¹⁰² “The Cooperative Dormitory Enlargement,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, May 17, 1918, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19180517-1>

¹⁰³ “Cooperative Dormitory,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, November 22, 1918, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19181122-4>

¹⁰⁴ Robert M. Fogelson, *The Great Rent Wars: New York, 1917-1929* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 18.

prices continued to climb.¹⁰⁵ The housing shortage begun in the onset of WWI only intensified after the war, and tenants charged their landlords with taking advantage of the shortage through rent gouging.¹⁰⁶ The end of the teens in New York City was an immensely profitable time for landlords with tenants struggling to stay in their apartments. This moment demonstrated Barnard's reliance on the surrounding area's privately owned apartment buildings. By 1919, the owner of 606 West 116th Street wanted to sell the building, ideally to Barnard. Without the funds to purchase the building, the future of cooperative dormitories was up in the air.¹⁰⁷ It is unclear what happened to the Broadview apartments following the end of their usage for the cooperative dormitory. The alumnae association said that the apartments, after the expiration of the lease on October 1, 1920, were held onto by the college because of the rental crisis, but they were not used to house students.¹⁰⁸

The rent laws of April and September of 1920 to protect tenants from landlord profiteering and rent gouging exposed Barnard's reliance on Columbia's ability to easily evict tenants. By the end of 1919, the cooperative's future was uncertain. In the same year, Columbia had purchased 4 apartment houses on Claremont Avenue.¹⁰⁹ In the fall of 1920, the alumna chairman of the Co-operative Dormitory Committee wrote in *The Barnard Bulletin* that they anticipated cooperative students would be accommodated in one of Columbia's newly purchased

¹⁰⁵ Robert M. Fogelson, *The Great Rent Wars*, 18.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 23-4.

¹⁰⁷ "Report of the Alumnae Cooperative Dormitory Committee," *The Bulletin of the Associate Alumnae of Barnard College*, February 1920, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC11-08:355#page/14/mode/2up>.

¹⁰⁸ "Report of the of the Committee on Social Activities of Students Living Off The Campus," *The Bulletin of the Associate Alumnae of Barnard College*, April 1921, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC11-08:386#page/26/mode/2up>.

¹⁰⁹ Compiled by John B. Pine, *Charters Acts of the Legislature Official Documents and Records*, (New York: Columbia University, 1920), 114-116.

buildings. However, this meant pushing out the existing tenants, complicated by the passage of the housing laws. The chairman of the Alumnae Committee writes that

The whole housing situation at the present moment is in an upset condition due to the recently passed rent laws. Columbia has at the present moment no idea how many apartments will be placed at their immediate disposal in their newly acquired buildings. Consequently, Barnard has no idea where they stand in the matter. So the Alumnae Co-operative Dormitory Committee are utterly unable to report any definite plans for the fall.¹¹⁰

In the fall of 1920, instead of coming to furnished rooms, many Barnard students were forced to sleep in the gymnasium.¹¹¹ Eventually, students were moved into the 116th Street cooperative apartments, Brooks squeezed an additional 9 more students, and two “rest rooms” in the student hall were converted into dormitories for 8 students. The administration was unable to keep up with the rising cost of rentals in the city, so that renting floors in non-Columbia owned buildings became prohibitively expensive. Dean Gildersleeve continued to hold out hope Barnard would be able to fundraise to build additional wings on Brooks.¹¹² The “upset condition” of the housing situation demonstrated Barnard’s reliance on Columbia’s usage of rent gouging and other forms of landlord pressure to push out tenants to accommodate Barnard students.

¹¹⁰ “Report of the Drive Committee,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, June 11, 1920, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19200611-3>.

¹¹¹ “Report of the of the Committee on Social Activities of Students Living Off The Campus,” *The Bulletin of the Associate Alumnae of Barnard College*, April 1921, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC11-08:386#page/26/mode/2up>.

¹¹² Virginia Gildersleeve, “The Annual Report of the Dean 1919-1920,” *The Barnard Bulletin*, October 15, 1920, The Barnard Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:bulletin-19201015-1>.

John Jay Hall 29 Claremont Avenue 1919-1925

While the alumnae's lease of the apartments at 99 Claremont Avenue ended in 1919, the cooperative's culture and model of housing lived on. In the fall of 1920, Columbia rented 5 of the 24 apartments in 29 Claremont Avenue, or John Jay Hall, to Barnard. The rest of the building, according to *The Mortarboard*, contained "unmovable tenants."¹¹³ The administration initially intended that the five apartments be mixed cooperative and conventional housing. The cooperative dormitory and subsequent off-shoot in John Jay Hall help mark a significant shift in the normalized boundaries of homoromantic relationships at Barnard.

In *Blackberry Winter*, Mead discussed the evolving sexual politics of the home during the 1920s and the precariousness of respectable living arrangements in New York City. When Mead got to Barnard, the cooperative had officially been abolished. However, the rent crisis and Barnard's inability to secure more on-campus housing resulted in students continuing to live in John Jay Hall. Although it was originally intended to offer cooperative style apartments, the hall ended up being run conventionally. Despite this fact, a group of residents tried to uphold the co-op's ethos. The hall's social group committed to doing so was nicknamed the Ash Can Cats. The group perhaps adopted their name from the Ash Can School, an artistic movement of the early 20th century known for depicting lower class urban scenes.¹¹⁴ Mead tracks the ways in which political and sexual knowledge was passed down to the group from former cooperative members.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Barnard College, *The Mortarboard*, (New York, New York: 1922), 52, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:yearbook-1922#page/1/mode/2up>.

¹¹⁴ Weinberg, H. Barbara. "The Ashcan School," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, April 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ashc/hd_ashc.htm.

¹¹⁵ Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter*, 102.

While the play “Crushitis” documented romantic relationships with fellow women transparently and without a pathologizing lens, Mead points to the revolutionizing view of gender and sexuality during the 1920s. She writes

...we knew about Freud. Agnes Piel was being analyzed and, although overnight visitors were not allowed and had to be hidden when Miss Abbott pounced, Ag occasionally spent the night with us... We learned about homosexuality, too, mainly from the covert stories that drifted down to us through our more sophisticated alumnae sisters, through the Coop group, and through Léonie’s older sister, who was close to some members of the faculty. Allegations were made against faculty members, and we worried and thought over affectionate episodes in our past relationships with girls and wondered whether they had been incipient examples.¹¹⁶

Mead links alumnae relationships, campus-affiliated housing, and increasingly pathologized same-sex relationships at Barnard. By the time Mead came to Barnard, Freud’s influence over notions of desire and repression colored students’ past experiences and added a level of anxiety to budding relationships. Discussion of sexual relationships was meaningfully passed through alumnae networks affiliated with the cooperative, which was an expressly alternatively-minded group. Although Mead explores the shame associated with their past “affectionate episodes,” they notably discussed increasingly pathologized sexual and romantic relationships openly. The group carried and propelled the ideology of the co-op as seen through its membership. Like the co-op, John Jay Hall and the Ash Can Cats was comprised of students from different class and religious backgrounds. Reflecting on her time in the Ash Can Cats, Mead wrote that the group

¹¹⁶ Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter*, 103-4.

“belonged to a generation of young women who felt extraordinarily free—free from the demand to marry unless we chose to do so...”¹¹⁷ and prioritized “loyalty to women... [and] pleasure in conversation with women.”¹¹⁸ The professedly subversive sexual and political culture promulgated by the Ash Can Cats was a legacy of the cooperative dormitory’s culture of discussing increasingly pathologized sexual matters and radical politics, which fit into the broader cultural and political shifts of the time period.

Hewitt “Brooks West” Hall Claremont Avenue and 116th Street 1925-present

Following the 1920 housing emergency, along with the overwhelming demand for more on-campus options,¹¹⁹ Barnard embarked on another construction project, which marked the end of building on Barnard’s campus for the next thirty years.¹²⁰ The board finally fulfilled Dean Gildersleeve’s desire for a second wing of Brooks Hall and it was built with its back to Claremont. The dormitory was constructed without a significant donation and although the college still felt the financial constraints of their newly completed Student Hall, the board decided to build the residential hall with college funds.¹²¹ Originally referred to as “Brooks West,” it was officially opened in November of 1925 and named “Hewitt” after the former mayor of New York and second Barnard board chairman.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter*, 108.

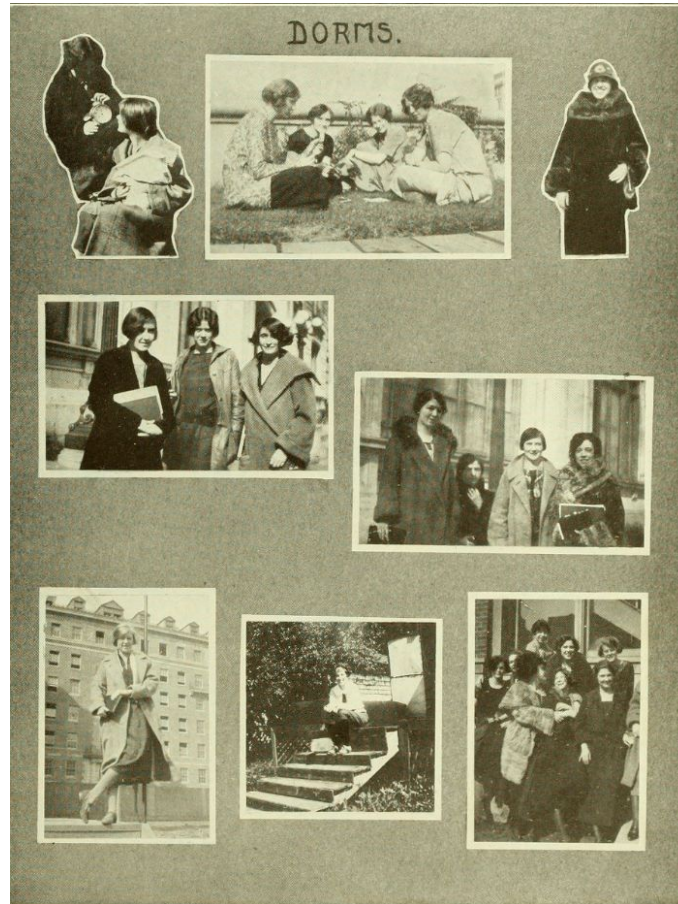
¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹¹⁹ “A Wing to Brooks Hall” *The Bulletin of the Associate Alumnae of Barnard College*, December 1921, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC11-08:442#page/16/mode/2up>

¹²⁰ Dolkart, *Morningside Heights*, 224.

¹²¹ “Alumnae Luncheon” *The Bulletin of the Associate Alumnae of Barnard College*, May 1925, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC11-08:718#page/6/mode/2up>.

¹²² “Hewitt Hall” *The Bulletin of the Associate Alumnae of Barnard College*, January 1926, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC11-08:751#page/10/mode/2up>.



*Dorm life is captured in this collage in the 1926 Mortarboard,
the first year of Hewitt's opening.¹²³*

The second wing of Brooks became the Dean's quarters, adding a level of administrative legitimacy.¹²⁴ The opening of the western wing meant about 350 students were accommodated on-campus.¹²⁵ It also meant the closing of John Jay Hall. Hewitt and Brooks' capacity for 350

¹²³ Barnard College, *The Mortarboard*, (New York, New York: 1926), 64, Barnard College Archives, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/bc:yearbook-1926#page/14/mode/2up>

¹²⁴ "New Dormitory: Hewitt Hall" *The Bulletin of the Associate Alumnae of Barnard College*, January 1916, The Barnard College Archive, <http://digitalcollections.barnard.edu/islandora/object/BC11-08:751#page/16/mode/2up>

¹²⁵ "Brooks Hall: Revised Announcement Regarding Residence," 1907, Student Life Handbooks and Residence Guides, BC 11.1, Box 1, Folder 2: Brooks Hall, Barnard Archives. "Announcement Regarding Residence 1928-1929," 1928, Student Life Handbooks and Residence Guides, BC 11.1, Box 1, Folder 3: Hewitt Hall, Barnard College Archives.

students marked an end to the preoccupation over residential space for students during the proceeding several decades. However, student, alumnae, and the administrative investment in the social, sexual, and racial politics of Barnard housing continued.

Epilogue: Continued Negotiations Over the Home in 1925 and Beyond

The same year that Hewitt opened its doors, Zora Neale Hurston became the first black student to matriculate at Barnard College. At the time of her entrance into Barnard, Hurston was already a famous novelist, but Dean Gildersleeve did not believe her academic record merited a scholarship.¹²⁶ Barnard's previous exclusion of black students and Gildersleeve's reticence regarding (famed) Hurston's matriculation speaks to Barnard's systemic racism and the severity of barriers for black students. The question of Hurston's living arrangements was a point of anxiety on the part of the administration. Unable to pay the high fees of the Barnard dormitories, and after a brief stint living and working as an assistant for a nearby intellectual, Hurston eventually made her home in the nearby Harlem. During the same period, Harlem's black population increased by tens of thousands. The neighborhood was establishing itself as a black cultural mecca as Barnard took miniscule steps towards integration.¹²⁷ The administrative treatment of Hurston as the first (known and openly) black student on Barnard's campus gestures towards the lasting resonances of the housing question. This topic is carefully considered in "The African American Female Elite: The Early History of African American Women in the Seven Sisters colleges, 1880-1960," by Linda Perkins.

As Linda Perkins has shown, women's colleges had different early policies regarding admitting black students, but all were most reticent towards the prospect of integrating the

¹²⁶ Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject*, 145.

¹²⁷ Stefan M. Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University*, 22.

dormitories.¹²⁸ Although no documented quotas for black students at Barnard have been found, the number of black students was marginal following Hurston's matriculation, unofficially 2 per class until the 1950s.¹²⁹ 1931 was the first year that the application for on-campus housing inquired about "Race," "Color," and "Church Affiliation."¹³⁰ In a 1930 letter from Dean Gildersleeve to Dean M. Carey Thomas of Bryn Mawr, Dean Gildersleeve writes:

We have never had a negro student in residence in the Barnard College dormitories, but there have been at least two in residence at Johnson Hall, our University residence for women graduate and professional students... I think, however, that the situation in a graduate hall is somewhat different from that in the undergraduate residences. Last September we assigned a room in a Barnard dormitory to a negro girl, and were prepared to make the experiment, but she failed her entrance examination.¹³¹

This letter demonstrates the historic exclusion of black students at Barnard, as well as foreshadows the financial barriers and systemic racism black Barnard students experienced when they did gain entrance. The continued negotiation over housing was a symptom of broader college tensions. Dean Gildersleeve's letter was in response to M. Carey Thomas' inquiry about the college's experience with housing black students. Thomas explained that a Bryn Mawr administrator's acceptance of four black women "to the summer school seems to be that whenever entertainments are given... a solid block of negro men from the neighborhood of Bryn Mawr

¹²⁸ Linda Perkins, "The African American Female Elite," 147.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹³⁰ "Bulletin of Information Residence Halls," 1931, Administrative Publications, 11: Student Life Handbooks and Residence Halls, BC11.1, Box 1, Folder 15, Barnard College Archives.

¹³¹ Letter, Virginia Gildersleeve to M. Carey Thomas, December 15, 1930, Administrative Offices, 5: Dean's Office, 1930-31, BC5.1, Box 90, Folder 17d, Barnard College Archives.

appears in the audience, last summer I am told from twenty-five to thirty.”¹³² Black men’s presence on the overwhelmingly white women’s college campus is implied to be the most dire threat of admitting black women to the college. M. Cary Thomas’ letter inquiring about Barnard’s experience with black women in the college dorms is based in a white supremacist belief in black men’s proclivity towards violence against white women. As Barnard slowly began to admit more black women, integrating the dormitories was seen to be an “experiment” whose results held grave implications and were far from certain.

This investigation into the connections between design, systems of governance, and administrative involvement to achieve respectable white femininity in this urban setting is intended to contextualize and ground proceeding housing debates. Into the 1920s and beyond, the Barnard administration began to take a more involved approach to on-campus housing. The existing systems of governance, cultivation of student investment in respectability, and the increased population of students in on-campus dormitories produced a relatively smooth transition into greater administrative involvement. However, as shown by the cooperative dormitory, students’ acceptance of rules and cultural norms was not universal nor static. Barnard housing policy remained relatively stagnant until 1968, amidst Columbia’s occupation and upheaval of the university. The year saw a litany of demands from students, most all directed at the Columbia administration. However, the university-wide protests also manifested at Barnard. Following the administrative reprimanding and eventual expulsion of Barnard’s Linda LeClair, who was covertly living with her boyfriend off-campus, students’ main demand from the Barnard administration regarded housing policy. The incident provoked national press coverage

¹³² Letter, M. Carey Thomas to Virginia Gildersleeve, December 12, 1930, Administrative Offices, Dean’s Office, 1930-31, BC5.1, Box 90, Folder 17d, Barnard College Archives.

and resulted in the overhauling of residential policy and the emergence of co-ed dorms at the university. The following year, in 1969, the Barnard Organization of Soul Sisters, the college's newly formed black student group, demanded and won an all-black residence hall. Housing would continue to be a site for agitation and challenging of Barnard's social order. As the demographics, as well as sexual and political norms of the college, university, and city changed, students and the administration would continue to look to housing policy as a point of control, pressure, and resistance.

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