

BARNEY, Ida. November 6, 1886–March 7, 1982.

SMITH COLLEGE (BA 1908), YALE UNIVERSITY (PhD 1911).

Ida Barney was born in New Haven, Connecticut, the first of two daughters of Ida (Bushnell) (1858–1941) and Samuel Eben Barney (1859–1940), natives of Connecticut who married in 1884. Her father was born in New Haven, graduated from the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University in 1879, served as a consultant on various engineering projects, and was on the civil engineering faculty at Yale from 1882 until his retirement in 1924. Her sister, Elizabeth Hunt (1894–1958), graduated from Smith College in 1914 and was secretary to the dean, and later to the registrar, of the Yale Divinity School.

Ida Barney attended New Haven High School 1900–04, Smith College 1904–08, and Yale Graduate School 1908–11. She was a mathematics major at Smith, where her studies included a course in general astronomy and one in the theory and use of transit instruments in addition to various ones in geometry, calculus, theory of equations, history of mathematics, and real and complex variables. Her courses at Yale included, among others, advanced theory of functions, elliptic functions, Abelian functions, and abstract thermodynamics, all from James Pierpont, who also directed her dissertation. She received her PhD from Yale in 1911.

After Barney finished her graduate work, she spent the next ten years on various mathematics faculties, starting as professor of mathematics at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, 1911–12. She was at Smith College for six years: as an assistant 1912–13, as instructor 1913–17, and as assistant professor 1920–21. Between her two periods of time at Smith, she was professor first at Lake Erie College in Painesville, Ohio, 1917–19, and then at Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1919–20, where she was the only member of the department. All but Rollins College were women's colleges at the time.

Barney spent the rest of her life in or around New Haven, where she and her sister lived with their parents until their parents' deaths in the early 1940s. After that Ida Barney and her sister lived in the family home until her sister's death in 1958.

In 1921 Barney enrolled in a graduate course in astronomy at Yale, and the following year she was appointed research assistant at the Yale Observatory. She took additional graduate courses in astronomy in 1922 and 1928. Early in her tenure at the observatory she became involved in a major star mapping project under the direction of Frank Schlesinger. This project, cataloguing positions and proper motions of stars, was done with the participation of the Lick Observatory of the University of California, the US Naval Observatory, and the Royal Observatories at Greenwich and the Cape of Good Hope. Barney was coauthor with Schlesinger, and sometimes others, of twelve volumes of catalogues that appeared in the *Transactions of the Astronomical Observatory of Yale University*. The first six of these volumes, appearing 1925 through 1934, were produced before IBM punch-card machines were used to facilitate computations.

After Frank Schlesinger's retirement in 1941, Barney was named director of the project. Between 1945 and 1950 she authored another eight volumes of catalogues. In 1949 she was promoted to research associate in astronomy, with the rank of associate professor, for a five-year term. When the project was completed in 1950 it resulted in what is known as the Yale Photographic Zone catalogues. In 1951

through 1954 Barney authored a supplementary volume and two revised catalogues. She also coauthored three new catalogues, one in 1954 and two in 1959, four years after her retirement.

Barney was recognized by her colleagues for her achievements. In 1945 the American Astronomical Society created a council, and the following year Barney was elected to a three-year term on it. She was a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of London. In 1952 Barney was awarded the Annie J. Cannon Prize, established in 1934 and given no more often than every three years, by the American Astronomical Society. According to an item in the April 1953 issue of the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific*, “Miss Barney was cited for her work on the . . . Yale Photographic Zone Catalogue, which required a half-million measurements and twenty-three years of computation work before it was completed in 1950” (65:99). A letter to the editor of *Sky and Telescope* after Barney’s death in 1982 quoted Dirk Brouwer, director of the Yale Observatory 1941–66, concerning her receipt of the prize: “It seems especially fitting that the prize named for a woman who classified a half-million spectra should be given to one who made approximately the same number of measures for the positions and motions of stars.”

Ida Barney continued to live in the family house in New Haven for several years. She had no immediate survivors at the time of her death in an assisted living facility in Hamden, Connecticut, just outside New Haven, at age ninety-five in 1982. She is buried in the family plot in the Grove Street Cemetery in New Haven.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA (charter member), Amer. Astron. Soc., Internat. Astron. Union, Roy. Astron. Soc., AAAS, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi.

Dissertation:

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Publications:

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1031 stars $+85^\circ$ to $+90^\circ$, with A. J. J. van Woerkom; 26, pt. 2 (1959), catalogue of 8380 stars $+50^\circ$ to $+55^\circ$, with D. Hoffleit and R. B. Jones; 27 (1959), catalogue of 8164 stars $+55^\circ$ to $+60^\circ$, with D. Hoffleit and R. B. Jones.

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1928b Review of *Romance of the Sun*, by M. Proctor. *Science* n.s., 67:444–45.

1929 Review of *Life and Work of Sir Norman Lockyer*, by T. M. Lockyer and W. L. Lockyer, with the assistance of Professor H. Dingle. *Science* n.s., 69:475–76.

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1947 On the accuracy of the proper motions in the general catalogue derived from the Yale photographic positions in the zone $+9^\circ$ to $+20^\circ$. *Astron. J.* 52:176–77.

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1949b Investigation of the magnitude error in the declinations of the *General Catalogue* from a comparison with the Yale photographic positions. *Astron. J.* 54:150–53.

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