

COLLIER, Myrtie. September 14, 1877–June 25, 1974.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (BS 1911), UNIVERSITÉ DE STRASBOURG (PhD 1930).

Myrtie Collier was born in Carthage, Missouri, the third of four children of Angeline (Willson) (b. 1839), of Kentucky, and Ervin Collier (b. 1832), a farmer, originally from Indiana. According to the 1880 and 1900 census records, her parents married in about 1871 and had two sons, Erwin (b. ca. 1873) and Ellis (b. 1875), and two daughters, Myrtie and Josie (b. 1880), all born in Missouri. The household in 1880 also included two daughters of her father, Wenona and Mary, ages nineteen and seventeen, born in Kansas, presumably from an earlier marriage. Myrtie Collier and her younger sister were both listed as teachers in the 1900 census.

After obtaining her bachelor's degree at age thirty-three in 1911 from the University of Chicago, Collier moved to California to become a mathematics teacher and chairman of the department at the Los Angeles State Normal School, predecessor of the University of California, Los Angeles. The State Normal School was established in 1881; in 1919 it offered its first instruction at the postsecondary level and became the Southern Branch, University of California, a two-year institution. It added a four-year teachers' curriculum in 1922, a four-year letters and science curriculum in 1923, and awarded its first bachelor's degree in 1923. While teaching at the Normal School, Collier was doing educational experiments and publishing articles in the journal *School Science and Mathematics*. She published one more article in this journal after she received her PhD in 1930.

Collier remained at the Southern Branch of the University of California as chairman of the department through 1920 and as assistant professor from 1920 until 1928, a year after the school's name changed to the University of California at Los Angeles. She took a year's leave of absence 1920–21 and was for some time in 1920 an associate in the mathematics department at the University of Chicago. While there she was a member of the program committee for the junior mathematical club at the university for 1920–21. In 1928 she left UCLA to pursue further graduate study and received her PhD cum laude from the University of Strasbourg in 1930, when she was fifty-two. She returned to Los Angeles, where she served as department chairman at Immaculate Heart College (now closed) from 1930 until her retirement in 1947 as professor emeritus. Upon her retirement, the students of the mathematics study club at Immaculate Heart honored her with a dinner for her successful service with the college. While at Immaculate Heart she often attended meetings of the AMS held in the Los Angeles area.

Collier was, by her own account, a great traveler. In addition to other trips, she was in Europe in summer 1937. She considered herself a student of the history of science and anthropology, and she enjoyed music. She was a Presbyterian.

Myrtie Collier maintained her residence in Los Angeles until her death of pneumonia as a consequence of left ventricular failure and longer term heart problems. She died in Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles at age ninety-six in 1974 and was buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park, in Glendale, California.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA (charter member), AAAS (fellow), Pi Mu Epsilon.

Dissertation:

1930 Sur quelques points de la théorie des fonctions entières ou méromorphes d'ordre fini; Groupes primitifs simplement transitifs de degré vingt et un. PhD dissertation, Université de Strasbourg. Paris: Gauthier-Villars.

Publications:

1914a Development work in arithmetic. *Sch. Sci. Math.* 14:294–97.

1914b Play and games in arithmetic. *Sch. Sci. Math.* 14:229–31.

1916 Practical work in arithmetic. *Sch. Sci. Math.* 16:524–29.

1922a Learning fractions. *Sch. Sci. Math.* 22:121–27.

1922b Learning to multiply fractions. *Sch. Sci. Math.* 22:324–29.

1922c The need of a general course in mathematics. *Sch. Sci. Math.* 22:845–50.

1933 Relearning fractions. *Sch. Sci. Math.* 33:389–93.

References to: AmMSc 9P–10P.

Other sources: Owens questionnaire 1940; US Census 1880, 1900 MO, 1920, 1930 CA; California death certificate; SSDI.

Last modified: December 9, 2008.