

**LITZINGER, Marie.** May 14, 1899–April 7, 1952.

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE (BA 1920, MA 1922), UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (PhD 1934).

Marie Paula Litzinger was born in Bedford, Pennsylvania, the eldest of five children of Katherine (O'Connell) (1870–1948) and Rush C. Litzinger (1865–1927), both natives of Pennsylvania. Her father worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad as clerk, bookkeeper, and accountant. When the railroad moved its offices out of Bedford, he resigned his position and opened an insurance and real estate office there. The other children were Katherine (1902–1990), Margaret (b. ca. 1905), Rush C. Jr. (ca. 1906–1910), and Anna E. (b. ca. 1909).

Marie Litzinger attended elementary and secondary school in Bedford and graduated from high school in 1916. She then attended Bryn Mawr College 1916–23, where she received both her bachelor's and master's degrees. While there she held several scholarships; she was the James E. Rhoads sophomore scholar 1917–18, the first Charles S. Hinchman memorial scholar 1918–19, and the Maria D. Eastman Brooke Hall memorial scholar and Anna M. Powers memorial scholar 1919–20. In 1920 Marie Litzinger was awarded her BA in Latin and mathematics, magna cum laude. She was awarded the Bryn Mawr European fellowship and the Shippen foreign scholarship 1920–21, but did not study abroad until 1923. She also taught in the Devon Manor School in nearby Devon, Pennsylvania, during her two years as a master's student 1920–22. While at Bryn Mawr she studied with [Olive C. Hazlett](#), [Anna Pell Wheeler](#), and Charlotte A. Scott.

Litzinger was awarded a mathematics resident fellowship of \$810 for additional graduate study at Bryn Mawr in 1922–23, the year after she received her master's degree. In addition to other work, she gave one talk each semester in the Mathematical Journal Club at Bryn Mawr. During the year 1923–24 she went to Europe and attended courses by G. Castelnuovo, F. Enriques, and V. Volterra at the University of Rome. The following year she taught at the Greenwich Academy in Greenwich, Connecticut.

Litzinger began her association with Mount Holyoke College in 1925. She was instructor 1925–28 and assistant professor 1928–37. During this period Marie Litzinger's sister Anna was a student at Mount Holyoke. Anna Litzinger graduated in 1931 with an honors paper in chemistry and received a master's degree in chemistry in 1933. Her sister Margaret attended Drexel Institute of Art, Science, and Industry in Philadelphia in the late 1920s.

During the years 1928 through 1934 Marie Litzinger was in residence for four quarters at the University of Chicago, one in autumn 1929 on a leave of absence from Mount Holyoke. She wrote her PhD dissertation at Chicago under the direction of L. E. Dickson and received her doctorate in 1934. Her dissertation was published in the *Transactions* of the AMS the following year.

In 1937 Marie Litzinger was promoted to associate professor and was made chairman of the department at Mount Holyoke. She remained department chairman and was promoted to professor in 1942. She held a chair in mathematics from the John Stewart Kennedy Foundation after 1948. While at Mount Holyoke, Litzinger notably strengthened the mathematics department. Among her college activities was work on the academic committee, the space advisory committee, and the advisory committee on appointments, reappointments, and promotions. She was also active in the Connecticut Valley Colloquium, the Mount Holyoke chapter of the AAUP,

and the Connecticut Valley section of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England, where she served as secretary 1936–38, vice president 1939–40, president elect 1940–41, and then president. In 1942 she and B. H. Brown of Dartmouth prepared the questions for the fifth Putnam Competition. Litzinger joined the AMS shortly after she went to Mount Holyoke and almost immediately started attending meetings of the society. From 1934 through 1949, with the exception of one year, she attended at least one, and usually several, meetings a year; most were in New York City. Litzinger's entry in *Who Was Who in America (1951–1960)* indicates that she was a Democrat.

Litzinger traveled in France and Italy in the summer of 1951. She was forced by illness to take a leave of absence from the college in November that year. At that time she returned to Bedford, Pennsylvania, where her sister Katherine was a high school teacher. Marie Litzinger died several months later at age fifty-two. Her three sisters survived her. In a tribute after her death, Alzada Comstock, an economics colleague, recalled Litzinger's delicate humor, imaginative outlook, time for undergraduates, devotion to her family, and loyalty.

**Organizational affiliations:** AMS, MAA, AAUP, Sigma Xi.

**Dissertation:**

**1934** A basis for residual polynomials in  $n$  variables. PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, directed by Leonard Eugene Dickson. Private edition, 1935, distributed by the University of Chicago Libraries, reprinted from *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 37:216–25.

**Publications:**

**1935** A basis for residual polynomials in  $n$  variables. *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 37:216–25. Published version of PhD dissertation. Reviews: *JFM* 61.0085.04 (U. Wegner); *Zbl* 011.14804 (S. Lubelski). Presented by title to the AMS, New York City, 23 Feb 1935; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 41:191 #134.

**1949** Real numbers for freshmen. *Math. Mag.* 22:263–64.

**References to:** BiDWS*ci*, [BioWMath](#), WhAm 3.

“Marie Litzinger, Educator, Was 52,” *New York Times*, 8 Apr 1952.

“Marie Litzinger, 52, of Mt. Holyoke Staff,” *New York Herald-Tribune*, 8 Apr 1952.

Comstock, Alzada. “Marie Litzinger: 1899–1952,” *Mount Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly*, 36 (Aug 1952): 43.

**Other sources:** PhD dissertation vita 1935; Owens questionnaires 1937, 1940; Bryn Mawr College Archives; Mount Holyoke College Archives; Grinstein, “Some ‘Forgotten’ Women of Mathematics”; “Bedford Loses Prominent Citizen,” (Rush C. Litzinger obituary) *Bedford (PA) Gazette*, 10 Jun 1927; “Mrs. Katherine Litzinger,” (Obituary) *Bedford (PA) Gazette*, 17 Jun 1948; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920 PA, 1930 MA.

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