

WHELAN, A. Marie. September 6, 1895–June 14, 1966.

GOUCHER COLLEGE (BA 1918), JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY (PhD 1923).

Anna Marie Whelan was born in Baltimore, Maryland, the sixth of eight children of Honora A. (Conroy) (b. 1865) and James J. Whelan (b. 1862). Her parents had each emigrated from Ireland as children in about 1875 and had married eight or nine years later. In 1900, according to the census report, the family included seven children: James E. (b. 1885); Catherine M. (b. 1886); Elenora [Eleanora] (b. 1888); Jim Joseph [James J.] (b. 1890); John Joseph (b. 1892); Anna M., (b. 1894 [*sic*]); and Loretta E. (b. 1897). The father's occupation was listed as clerk. In 1920 it was reported that six children were living at home in Baltimore, including the eighth child, Laura E., age nineteen. That year the father's occupation was listed as salesman at a clothiers.

After Marie Whelan graduated from Western High School in Baltimore in 1914, she entered Goucher College and graduated four years later. She began her graduate studies at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in the fall of 1918. Except for the year 1920–21 when she taught in Pullman, West Virginia, she attended Johns Hopkins continuously until she received her doctorate in 1923. She attended the summer school in 1919 and held a university fellowship in mathematics 1919–20. A Johns Hopkins directory indicates that she also taught in the summer sessions of 1919 and 1920. While her dissertation was written under the direction of Frank Morley, in her dissertation vita she also acknowledged the “valuable suggestions” received from A. B. Coble, an earlier PhD student of Morley and former Johns Hopkins faculty member, who was then on the faculty at the University of Illinois. Her subordinate subjects at Johns Hopkins were applied mathematics and geophysics.

After receiving her PhD in 1923, Marie Whelan, who sometimes used the name A. Marie Whelan professionally, taught for two years each at Olivet College in Michigan and Dominican College of San Rafael in California. She joined the faculty at Hunter College as instructor in 1927 and was an assistant professor from 1932 until her retirement in 1965. During her first decade there she often was associated with the evening and extension sessions.

In addition to the two plays she published in the Mathematics Clubs section of the *Monthly*, **1930** and **1938**, Whelan also wrote a two-act play, “Grabitall,” that was presented by the mathematics club at Hunter College in the spring of 1937. The play dealt with the mathematics of the Townsend Plan, a proposal to end the Great Depression by instituting a pension plan for all retirees over the age of sixty.

Anna Marie Whelan died in 1966 in the Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan after a short illness. She was seventy. After her death, a high requiem mass was celebrated at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church and she was buried in New Cathedral Cemetery in Baltimore. She was survived by her sister Loretta E. Whelan with whom she had lived in New York, a sister-in-law, and a niece and nephew.

Organizational affiliations: MAA, Phi Beta Kappa.

Dissertation:

1923 The theory of the binary octavic. PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, directed by Frank Morley. Handwritten. Printed version, 1926, reprinted from *Amer. J. Math.* 48:73–100.

Publications:

1926 The theory of the binary octavic. *Amer. J. Math.* 48:73–100. Presented by F. Morley to the AMS, New York City, 24 Feb 1923; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 29:147–48 #4. Published version of PhD dissertation. Review: *JFM* 52.0109.03 (R. Brauer).

1930 Discord in mathematics land. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 37:151–56. Review: *JFM* 56.00–75.04 (L. Buchhorn).

1938 It can't happen here: A mathematical musical farce. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 45:617–28.

Presentation not listed above:

Invariants of the binary octavic. Presented to the MAA, Baltimore, MD, 12 May 1923.

References to:

“Deaths: Whelan.” *Baltimore Sun*, 16 Jun 1966.

“Miss Whelan, Ex-Hunter Professor.” *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 16 Jun 1966.

Other sources: PhD dissertation vita 1923; Hunter College Archives; Ferdinand Hamburger Archives, The Johns Hopkins University; communication with Goucher College Alumnae Association (via Rochelle Adler Effron); Cockey, “Mathematics at Goucher”; US Census 1900, 1920 MD.

Last modified: December 14, 2008.