

PORTER, Goldie (Horton). September 4, 1887–May 11, 1972.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS (BA 1908, PhD 1916), SMITH COLLEGE (MA 1910).

Goldie Printis Horton was the youngest of three surviving daughters, of four children born, of Colistia (Polk) (b. 1861), a Texas native, and John Thomas Horton (b. 1857), originally from Missouri. Her parents married in about 1881. She was born in 1887 in Athens, Texas, and her older sisters were Mary Coral (1882–1967) and Lillian Pearl (b. 1885). Her father was a physician, and in 1900 and 1910 the family lived in Quanah, Texas, just below the southeastern part of the Texas panhandle.

Goldie Horton attended public schools in Quanah before entering the University of Texas in 1904. While at the university she was secretary-treasurer of her senior class and was a member of the YWCA. She graduated from Texas in 1908 before her twenty-first birthday. Her sister Pearl also received a BA from Texas in 1908 and was a public school teacher for some time after her graduation. Her eldest sister, Coral, studied at the University of Texas, taught school, married, and then earned a BA in 1924 and an MA in 1927 from Texas. Coral was a member of the University of Texas history department until her retirement in 1959 as assistant professor; she was associated with the Texas State Historical Association as corresponding secretary 1927–42 and corresponding secretary and treasurer 1942–67.

After receiving her bachelor's degree, Goldie Horton taught in the high school in Grandview, Texas, for a year before going to Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, with a fellowship in 1909. Records at Smith show that on October 11, 1909, Horton was made an honorary member of the mathematics club of the college, and on March 14, 1910, she gave a talk to the club on "Motion of Aggregate Points." She completed her master's thesis, "The development of analysis," in May 1910 and returned to Texas, where she taught at the high school in Amarillo for the next two years, 1910–12. Horton then studied at Bryn Mawr College as a fellow 1912–13.

In 1913 Goldie Horton was hired as a tutor at Texas. She also continued her graduate work and in 1916 completed the work for her PhD with a dissertation in analysis written under the direction of M. B. Porter; the approval sheet was also signed by H. J. Ettlinger and E. L. Dodd. Horton wrote in the dissertation: "I take the greatest pleasure in expressing my deep appreciation of the ready counsel and invaluable assistance given me by Professor Milton Brockett Porter, who for many years has been my teacher and friend and whose kind interest inspired me to continue my studies." This was the first doctoral degree in mathematics awarded at Texas. She was also the first woman to receive a PhD in any field at Texas.

Goldie Horton remained a tutor until 1917 when she was promoted to instructor in pure mathematics; in 1926 she was promoted to adjunct professor and in 1935 to assistant professor. According to Robert E. Greenwood's "In Memoriam," in the summer of 1921 she worked on the preparation of ballistic tables at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. Her parents were still living in Quanah in 1920, but Goldie Horton and her widowed mother were living together in Austin in 1930.

In 1934 Horton and Milton Brockett Porter, her colleague and dissertation advisor of eighteen years earlier, had notes for a text reproduced by Edwards Brothers of Ann Arbor, Michigan, a company that often produced lithographs of lecture notes. On December 26 of that year she and Porter were married. This was the third marriage for M. B. Porter, who had been twice widowed. Milton Brockett

Porter was born on November 22, 1869, in Sherman, Texas. He received a BS in 1892 from the University of Texas and an MA in 1895 and a PhD in 1897 from Harvard University. After working as a private tutor in Texas and teaching at the University of Texas and at Yale University, he returned in 1902 as professor in pure mathematics to the University of Texas, where he remained until his retirement in 1945. M. B. Porter died in Austin on May 27, 1960.

Goldie Porter, still an assistant professor, stopped teaching full time and went on modified service in 1958. She continued part-time teaching until her retirement in 1966, when she was granted the title professor emeritus. Goldie Horton Porter was active in various organizations in Texas, particularly before she married. In 1919 she served as chair of the mathematics section of the Texas State Teachers' Association. She served as an officer of, gave talks to, and hosted parties for The Pentagonum, the mathematics club at the university. Furthermore, she was a founder, in 1920, of the University of Texas chapter of Alpha Phi, a social sorority, and in 1923, of the Austin chapter of AAUW, which she also served as treasurer, secretary, and president. In the late 1930s she described herself as a Democrat and indicated interests in gardening and housekeeping.

In 1930 Goldie Horton and her mother, then almost seventy years old, had a house built in Austin where the Porters lived after their marriage. Greenwood noted:

It soon became a misnomer to refer to the establishment as only a residence. It also became a library and a museum. Though both the Porters were avid readers they were obliged to curtail their acquisition of books only when they had no more place to store them. The Porters were lovers of music as well. Dr. M. B. Porter was an accomplished flutist, and Goldie served as his accompanist at the frequent informal musicales.

An amateur astronomer, Professor M. B. Porter had a small telescope at the Porter Museum and a sundial placed in the gardens. Both the Porters were notable collectors – of cut glass, silver, oriental and European porcelains, oriental rugs, ivories, art glass, pictures, *objets d'art* in general, many of museum quality. After the Porters' heirs had selected various pieces from the estate, such a vast collection remained that a two-day auction attracted a large audience, for the Porter collection was well-known for its coverage and depth. Indeed, the spirited bidding for the rare Meissen figurines, the Daum, Tiffany, and Gallé glass, and the antique furniture demonstrated the Porters' acuteness as collectors. (Greenwood, "In Memoriam")

Goldie Porter remained in Austin and died in her home in 1972 at eighty-four. She was survived by two nieces, a nephew, and two stepdaughters and was buried in Austin Memorial Park. Her Austin home, the Horton-Porter House, was built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places; it is on Windsor Road in the Old West Austin Historic District. Greenwood noted that among her bequests was one to the Texas governor's mansion of "a large Meissen group originally wrought in 1760 for German Royalty." She also endowed the Goldie Horton Porter Book Fund at Bryn Mawr College.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA, AAUP, AAUW, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi.

Thesis and dissertation:

1910 [Horton, G. P.] The development of analysis. MA thesis, Smith College. Typescript.

1916 [Horton, G. P.] Functions of limited variation and Lebesgue integrals. PhD dissertation, University of Texas, directed by Milton Brockett Porter. Handwritten. See also **1918**.

Publications:

1916a [Horton, G.] Concerning roulettes. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 23:237–41. Review: *JFM* 46.0932.05 (G. Szegő).

1916b [Horton, G.] A note on the calculation of Euler’s constant. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 23:73. Review: *JFM* 46.0347.07 (G. Szegő).

1918 [Horton, G. P.] Functions of limited variation and Lebesgue integrals. *Ann. of Math.* 2nd ser., 20:1–8. Published version of PhD dissertation. Review: *JFM* 46.0396.05 (M. Plancherel).

1919a [Horton, G. P.] The Pentagon during 1918–1919. *Texas Math. Teachers’ Bull.* 4 (3): 39–40.

1919b [Horton, G. P.] Saving time and gaining efficiency in teaching trigonometry. *Texas Math. Teachers’ Bull.* 4 (3): 11–14.

1919c [Horton, G. P.] Topics and references for the high school mathematics club. *Texas Math. Teachers’ Bull.* 5 (1): 33–34.

1920 [Horton, G. P.] Mathematics at the Houston meeting of the State Teachers Association. *Texas Math. Teachers’ Bull.* 5 (2): 31–32.

1934 [Horton, G. P.] with M. B. Porter. *Plane and Solid Geometry*. Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers.

Abstract not listed above:

1925 [Horton, G. P.] Darboux integrals. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 32:161 #2. Presented to the MAA, San Antonio, TX, 28 Nov 1924.

References to: AmMSc 7–8, 9P–11P; AmWom 1935–40; [BioWMath](#); WhoAmW 3–4.

“Dr. Porter Succumbs at Home.” *Austin American*, 12 May 1972.

Greenwood, Robert E. “In Memoriam: Mrs. Goldie Horton Porter.” Filed 27 Nov 1972. Documents and Minutes of the General Faculty, The Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Typescript.

Other sources: Center for Research Libraries College Catalog Collection; Smith College Archives; University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library; communication with University of Texas Archives; Lewis, “The Building of the University of Texas Mathematics Faculty”; NatCAB 49 (Porter, Milton Brockett); US Census 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 TX.