STARK, Marion E. August 23, 1894–April 15, 1982.
Brown University (Women's College) (BA 1916), Brown University (MA 1917),
University of Chicago (PhD 1926).

Marion Elizabeth Stark, born in Norwich, Connecticut, was the daughter of Ella
E., born in 1859 in Massachusetts, and Charles L. Stark (1850–1926) of Connecticut.
It was reported in the 1900 census that she, her parents, and her paternal grand-
mother were living in Norwich. At that time, her parents had been married sixteen
years, and another child had died. In 1900 and 1910 her father was a salesman, and
in 1920 a buyer, for a dry goods store.

Stark received her elementary education at the Pearl Street School and the Mt.
Pleasant Street School, both in Norwich; her secondary education was at the Nor-
wich Free Academy.

After graduating from Brown (Women's College) in 1916, Stark remained the
next year as a Lyra Brown Nickerson fellow and received her master's degree in 1917.
From 1917 until 1919 Stark was the professor of mathematics, and sole mathematics
instructor, at Meredith College, a women's college in Raleigh, North Carolina. When
she left, her professorship at Meredith was taken for one year by Ida Barney.

Stark then became an instructor at Wellesley College where she was to remain,
except for further graduate work, for the rest of her career. During her first year
there, 1919–20, she took courses from Helen A. Merrill and Mabel M. Young while
teaching part time. As early as 1921 she was interested in geometrical constructions,
giving the first of many talks to mathematics clubs on that topic. She studied at the
University of Chicago during the summer quarter of 1923 and autumn 1924 through
summer 1925. She held a fellowship during 1924–25 and received her doctorate in
1926 with a dissertation in the calculus of variations.

In 1927, a year after receiving her PhD, Stark was promoted to assistant professor
at Wellesley. She was promoted to associate professor in 1936 and professor in 1945.
She retired as a Lewis Atterbury Stimson professor emeritus of mathematics in 1960.

In 1932 Stark attended the International Congress of Mathematicians in Zurich.
She continued to study mathematics: at the University of Chicago during the fall
quarter of 1938 and at Harvard 1939–40. Between 1940 and 1950 she published ten
book reviews in the *National Mathematics Magazine* (renamed *Mathematics Mag-
azine* in 1947). During this period, and continuing through 1960, Stark was on the
editorial staff of this journal; starting in 1944 she served as the editor of the "Brief
Notes and Comments," and when the journal changed its name she became editor
of the "Mathematical Miscellany" section for an additional three years. Through-
out her career she was involved with mathematics clubs. She wrote a mathematical
play, "Modern Mathematics Looks Up Its Ancestors," which was performed by the
Wellesley mathematics club in 1931 and again just before its publication in 1936. It
was also performed after its publication by, at least, Kappa Mu Epsilon at Mount
St. Scholastica College. Stark participated in mathematics institutes for high school
and college teachers from 1955 to 1958 at Middlebury College, Williams College,
Dartmouth College, and Brandeis University, respectively; during 1957 she was a
discussion leader for descriptive geometry. She continued to write reviews in the
1950s and early 1960s, first for *Scripta Mathematica* and then for the *American
Mathematical Monthly*. She served on the council of the Association of Teachers of
Mathematics in New England.

In at least the early 1930s, Marion Stark's widowed mother lived with her in Wellesley. Later Stark shared her home with Grace Ethel Arthur, the secretary to presidents of Wellesley for nearly four decades, who retired in 1952. During World War II, Stark temporarily adopted several children from Europe and a child from Korea, at least some through the Foster Parents Plan and the Christian Children's Fund.

Stark was an enthusiastic traveler whose summer trips included, among many others, Europe in 1921, Nova Scotia in 1955, and Glacier National Park in 1956. In the late 1930s she described herself as a Baptist and a Republican and indicated that her hobbies were poetry and horticulture and that her favorite recreation was tennis.

After her retirement in 1960, Stark lived in Rockport, Massachusetts, where she was a member of the Congregational church. In 1974 she moved to New Jersey. In addition to being an avid gardener, she wrote poetry, collected nautical art, and in her later years taped recordings of mathematical books for blind students.

Stark suffered a stroke in about 1971. She died at age eighty-seven at her home in Waterford, New Jersey, in 1982. It was noted in the *Boston Globe* obituary that she had no survivors except for the children she befriended. Funeral services and burial were in Norwich, Connecticut.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA, Canadian Math. Congress (now Canadian Math. Soc.), Circolo Mat. di Palermo, AAAS, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi.

Dissertation:
1926 A self-adjoint boundary value problem associated with a problem of the calculus of variations. PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, directed by Gilbert Ames Bliss. Typescript. Abstract: *University of Chicago. Abstracts of theses. Science series* 5:55-62.

Publications:
1920 Mathematical nightmare. *Sepiad* (Brown University) 20 (May): 32–33. First two of five stanzas reprinted *Amer. Math. Monthly* 27 (1920): 424.
1936 Modern mathematics looks up its ancestors. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 43:299–304.
1940 Review of *Fabre and Mathematics and Other Essays*, by L. G. Simons. *Natl. Math. Mag.* 14:496.
1941 Constructions with limited means. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 48:475–79.
1942a Methods of mathematical proof for undergraduates. *Natl. Math. Mag.* 16:350–51.
1942b Review of *Basic College Mathematics*, by C. W. Munshower and J. F. Wardell. *Natl. Math. Mag.* 17:48.
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1942d Review of *To Discover Mathematics*, by G. M. Merriman. *Natl. Math. Mag.* 16:319–20.
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1943 "We Look Before and After." *Natl. Math. Mag.* 18:116–19.
1944 Review of *Elementary Aviation*, by L. E. Moore. *Natl. Math. Mag.* 19:51–52.
1948a Review of *Analytic Geometry*, by D. S. Nathan and O. Helmer. *Math. Mag.* 21:268.
1948b Review of *Analytic Geometry and Calculus*, by J. F. Randolph and M. Kac. *Math. Mag.* 21:269–70.
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1949a Review of *College Algebra*, by M. Richardson. *Math. Mag.* 22:161.

1949b with H. Russell and M. Young. Helen A. Merrill, '86. *Wellesley Alum. Mag.* 33:353–54.

1950 Review of *First Year College Mathematics with Applications*, by P. H. Daus and W. M. Whyburn. *Math. Mag.* 23:268–69.

1953 Review of *Theorie der geometrischen Konstruktionen*, by L. Bierberbach. *Scripta Math.* 19:169–71.

1954 Review of *Symmetry*, by H. Weyl. *Scripta Math.* 20:78–79.

1955 Review of *Analytische Geometrie* 2nd ed., and *Projektive Geometrie* 3rd enl. ed., by W. Blaschke. *Scripta Math.* 21:286–87.

1959 Review of *College Algebra* 4th ed., by J. B. Rosenbach, E. A. Whitman, B. E. Meserve, and P. W. Whitman. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 66:605–6.

1961a Review of *Introductory Algebra*, by M. D. Eulenberg and T. S. Sunko. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 68:680–81.

1961b Review of *A Survey of Basic Mathematics*, by H. G. Apostle. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 68:76.

Abstract:

1926 A self-adjoint boundary value problem associated with a problem of the calculus of variations. *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 32:129–30 #40. Presented to the AMS, New York City, 2 Jan 1926. Based on PhD dissertation.

Presentation not listed above:

Some problems of a young instructor [by one who has been]. Presented to the MAA, Wellesley, MA, 12 Aug 1944.

References to: AmMSc 5–8, 9P–11P; AmWom 1935–40.

"Marion E. Stark, 87: Taught at Wellesley College." *Boston Globe*, 29 Apr 1982.

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Other sources: PhD dissertation vita 1926; Owens questionnaires 1937, 1940; Brown University Archives; Meredith College Archives; Wellesley College Archives; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920 CT, 1930 MA; SSDI.

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