

**JACKSON, Rosa L.** May 7, 1883–January 15, 1967.

WESTERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN (BA 1904), UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (MS 1922, PhD 1928).

Rosa Lea Jackson was the daughter of Mary Thom (Palmer) (b. ca. 1853) and James Knox Polk Jackson (1842–1925), natives of Tennessee. Her father was a farmer. There were four children in the family: a son, Hugh, born in about 1871, and three daughters, Willie Kate (1872–1943), Julia M. (1877–1963), and Rosa Lea. Her father was widowed by 1900. Rosa Lea Jackson attended public elementary and secondary schools in Ripley, Tennessee, where she was born.

Jackson entered The Western, a College and Seminary for Women, in Oxford, Ohio, in 1900. After her graduation in 1904 from the renamed Western College for Women, she was at Athens Female College (now Athens State University) in Alabama until 1910, as head of the mathematics department 1904–07 and as dean and professor of mathematics 1907–10.

In 1910–11 and summer 1911 she attended the University of Chicago as a graduate student in mathematics. The following academic year she taught history and was dean at Central College for Women in Lexington, Missouri, after which she taught at Ripley High School in her home town in Tennessee 1912–14 and was an acting adjunct professor at Randolph-Macon Woman's College 1914–16. She returned to Athens College as professor of mathematics and dean from 1916 to 1921. She was also head of the department when she joined the MAA in 1920. Some of the time she was at Athens College, her sister Julia was a professor of history and the registrar there.

In 1921–22 Rosa L. Jackson again attended the University of Chicago full time; she wrote her thesis in the calculus of variations and received her master's degree in 1922. She was instructor at Northwestern University from 1922 until 1926 and attended the University of Chicago in the summers of 1925 and 1926. She continued at Chicago during the academic year 1926–27, as a fellow, and in summer 1927. In 1927–28 she was instructor in mathematics at Leland Stanford Junior University, where her teaching schedule was listed as analytic geometry, differential and integral calculus, complex variables, calculus of variations, and a directed reading. She also finished her dissertation in calculus of variations and received her PhD from the University of Chicago in August 1928.

After receiving her doctorate, Jackson was an instructor at Hunter College from 1928 to 1930, following which she was instructor in the women's division of the newly opened Brooklyn College 1930–31. In 1931 she joined the faculty at Alabama College, State College for Women (now the University of Montevallo) in Montevallo, Alabama, where she remained as professor and head of the mathematics department until she retired as professor emeritus in 1959, when she was nearly seventy-six. The school had become coeducational in 1956.

Jackson regularly attended meetings of the Southeastern Section of the MAA in the 1930s; she continued attending, although more sporadically, through at least 1950. In 1937 Alabama College started a chapter of the mathematics honorary fraternity Kappa Mu Epsilon, and Rosa Lea Jackson served as corresponding secretary of the chapter at least from 1950 until 1952.

Eight years after her retirement, Rosa Lea Jackson died in Selma, Alabama, of a coronary occlusion due to arteriosclerotic heart disease. She was buried in Maplewood Cemetery in her hometown of Ripley, Tennessee.

**Organizational affiliations:** AMS, MAA, NCTM, Kappa Mu Epsilon.

**Thesis and dissertation:**

**1922** A problem in the calculus of variations involving second derivatives. MS thesis, University of Chicago, directed by Gilbert Ames Bliss. Typescript.

**1928** The boundary value problem of the second variation for parametric problems in the calculus of variations. PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, directed by Gilbert Ames Bliss. Typescript. Abstract: *University of Chicago. Abstracts of theses. Science series.* 7:19–24.

**Publication:**

**1930** Review of *The History and Significance of Certain Standard Problems in Algebra*, by V. Sanford. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 37:445–46.

**References to:** AmMSc 7–8, 9P–11P.

**Other sources:** MS thesis vita 1922; PhD dissertation vita 1928; Owens questionnaires 1937, 1940; Brooklyn College Archives; Hunter College Archives; Stanford University Archives; Western College Archives; communications with Athens College Archives and with Western College Alumnae Association; US Census 1880, 1900, 1910 TN; Alabama death certificate.

Last modified: March 26, 2008.