

REILLY, Sister Mary Henrietta. February 14, 1895–April 21, 1964.

ST. XAVIER COLLEGE (BA 1923, MA 1925), CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA (PhD 1936).

Margaret Reilly was born in Chicago, Illinois, the daughter of Agnes (Finn) (b. 1869) and Michael Reilly (b. 1862), both born in Illinois of Irish parents. They married in 1891. In 1900 the family lived in Chicago, and there were three children, Agnes (b. 1893), Margaret (b. 1895), and Michael (b. 1898). Her father's occupation was listed as sewer builder.

Margaret Reilly received her high school diploma from Our Lady of Mercy Academy in Cincinnati in June 1914 and entered the congregation of the Religious Sisters of Mercy in Cincinnati that same month. She took the religious name Mary Henrietta and was known as Sister Henrietta. She took her perpetual vows in August 1917.

Except for her years as a doctoral student at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., all but one of Sister Mary Henrietta's assignments were in Cincinnati. She first taught in primary and secondary schools in Cincinnati while obtaining her bachelor's and master's degrees and her state high school life teacher's certificate. She then taught in a teachers' college in Cincinnati and studied for her doctorate in Washington. Finally, she spent the last decade of her life teaching in secondary schools in Piqua, Ohio, and in Cincinnati.

Sister Henrietta taught second grade at St. Edward School 1914–16; grades five and six at St. Andrew School 1917–19; grades nine and ten, and music at Our Lady of Mercy Academy 1919–22; grade nine and English at Elder High School 1922–25; and grades seven through ten and twelve at Mother of Mercy Academy 1925–28. During this period she obtained her bachelor's degree in 1923 from St. Xavier College (Xavier University since 1930), a Jesuit college for men, by attending special classes scheduled in late afternoons, Saturdays, and summers for the sisters from local and neighboring congregations. She obtained her state high school life certificate in December 1923 having also earned credits from what was called in congregation records Our Lady of Mercy Normal. She received a master's degree from St. Xavier College in August 1925 with a major in sociology and a minor in philosophy.

In the period 1928–36 Sister Henrietta taught mathematics and science, and she continued her studies. She taught at Teachers' College of the Athenaeum of Ohio 1928–31 and apparently earned some credits there as well. She then studied at Catholic University, where she was in residence 1931–32. She taught again at Teachers' College 1933–34 before returning to Catholic University where she was again in residence 1934–36. She wrote her dissertation in algebraic geometry and received her PhD in 1936.

Sister Henrietta then returned to Cincinnati to resume her college teaching of mathematics in the Athenaeum of Ohio. The Athenaeum had been formed by the archbishop of Cincinnati in 1928 as a collection of four institutions: Mount St. Mary's of the West and St. Gregory seminaries, Teachers' College, and the Institutum Divi Thomae, a graduate school of scientific research. Sister Henrietta was head of the department at Teachers' College at least from 1939 until 1949 and remained there until 1953, when the Teachers' College was discontinued and the Institutum relocated.

Sister Henrietta's teaching assignments were in high schools for the rest of her life. She taught in a high school in Piqua, Ohio, 1953–55; in Our Lady of Mercy High School in Cincinnati 1955–56, and in Mother of Mercy High School in the Westwood neighborhood of Cincinnati, 1956–64. At the high school level she taught English, religion, mathematics, history, chemistry, and Latin.

Sister Mary Henrietta Reilly died in Mercy Hospital, Hamilton, Ohio, in 1964 at sixty-nine.

Organizational affiliation: MAA.

Dissertation:

1936 Self-symmetric quadrilaterals in-and-circumscribed to the plane rational quartic curve with a line of symmetry. PhD dissertation, Catholic University of America, directed by Aubrey Edward Landry. Printed for The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, by J. H. Furst Co., Baltimore, MD. Summary: *Catholic University of America. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Summaries of dissertations accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for degrees.* 1935–1936: 16.

Other sources: Owens questionnaire 1937; communication with Sisters of Mercy Provincialate (OH); US Census 1900, 1910, 1920 IL, 1930 OH.

Last modified: December 12, 2008.