VAN BENSCHOTEN, Anna L. August 12, 1866–September 18, 1927.
Cornell University (BS 1894, PhD 1908), University of Chicago (MS 1900).

Anna Lavinia Van Benschoten was born in Elmira, New York, the daughter of Mary Jane (Pugsley) (1841–1885) and Moses M. Van Benschoten (1839–1872), both of New York. During the Civil War, Moses Van Benschoten served in the infantry from May 1861 until May 1863 and again from September 1864 until June 1865. Her parents married in November 1865. In 1870 Anna and her mother, Mary Van Benschoten, a music teacher, were living with Anna's maternal grandfather in Binghamton, New York.

Anna Van Benschoten received her primary and secondary education in the public schools of Binghamton, and she graduated from Binghamton Central High School in 1886. By this time both of her parents had died, and she was listed as boarding with Mary E. T. Ames in an 1888 Binghamton, New York, directory. Ames is later listed as parent or guardian on Van Benschoten's Cornell transcript. Although it is unclear what Van Benschoten was doing throughout the period 1886–91, according to a 1928 letter written by Amy J. Douglass, who lived with Van Benschoten from the end of 1921 until her death in 1927, she traveled in Europe (England, Scotland, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy) from June to December 1890.

Van Benschoten enrolled as an undergraduate at Cornell University in 1891 and studied under James E. Oliver, James McMahon, and George W. Jones. Most of the courses she took were in the general area of geometry, although she also took courses in algebra and a year-long seminar on mathematics pedagogy. After graduating from Cornell in 1894, she taught at Binghamton Central High School 1894–98. She spent the summers of 1897 and 1898 and the following two academic years at the University of Chicago before receiving her master's degree in mathematics and astronomy in 1900.

After receiving her master's degree, Van Benschoten spent a year traveling in Europe and taking courses in mathematics and astronomy in Göttingen. In particular, she was in Felix Klein's projective geometry lecture in winter 1900–01. By that time a number of women mathematics students from the United States had studied with Klein and others in Göttingen.

In 1901 Van Benschoten began her college teaching career as professor at Wells College, a women's college in Aurora, New York. She assumed the position of professor that was vacated when Annie MacKinnon (Fitch) married. Van Benschoten was on the faculty at Wells until 1920, except for leaves of absence. During most of her first decade there she was the only one giving instruction in mathematics. During most of her second decade she was joined by one instructor. Van Benschoten first took a leave in the academic year 1906–07 to resume her graduate studies at Cornell before receiving her doctorate in 1908. One of her students at Wells was Anna Mayme Howe, class of 1908, who later earned her PhD in mathematics at Cornell. Van Benschoten had additional leaves during the second semester of 1914–15 and part of 1916–17; Helen Owens replaced her during both of these leaves. Van Benschoten also had a leave of absence 1918–20 after which she retired because of ill health. She spent part of the year 1918 at the University of Arizona teaching mathematics to "boys of the Student Army Corps" (Amy J. Douglass to Foster M. Coffin, 27 February 1928, Box 133, Deceased Alumni Files, #41-2-877, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library) and moved to Whittier, California, in about 1921. According to Douglass, "She gave up continuous teaching because of impaired health due to Rheumatic Arthritis and during her six years of residence in Whittier she did private tutoring" and taught at Whittier College "from January to April 1924." Her obituary indicates that she was at Whittier temporarily to replace a regular faculty member who was away.

Van Benschoten was a charter member of the MAA and was a member of the social sorority Kappa Kappa Gamma. Douglass reported that in addition to her earlier travels

in Europe, Van Benschoten made a third trip abroad to Norway, Sweden, Russia, and Germany, and that she also visited Alaska and Jamaica.

Van Benschoten died in her home in Whittier, California, at age sixty-one. Funeral services took place at St. Matthias Episcopal Church after which her remains were sent to Binghamton, New York, for interment. She left no immediate relatives.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA (charter member).

Thesis and dissertation:
1900 The motion of a particle attracted by a central force varying inversely as the fifth power of the distance. MS thesis, University of Chicago. Typescript.
1908 The birational transformations of algebraic curves of genus four. PhD dissertation, Cornell University, directed by Virgil Snyder. Typescript. Printed version, 1909, Baltimore, MD, reprinted from *Amer. J. Math.* 31:213–52.

Publication:
1909 The birational transformations of algebraic curves of genus four. *Amer. J. Math.* 31:213–52. Published version of PhD dissertation. Reviews: *JFM* 40.0633.02 (E. Löffler); *Rev. semestr. publ. math.* 18, pt. 1: 1 (E. B. Cowley). Presented as "Curves of genus 4 which remain invariant under birational transformation" to the AMS, Ithaca, NY, 6 Sep 1907; abstract: *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 14:67–68 #33.

Abstract not listed above:
1912 Products of quadric inversions and linear transformations in space. *Bull. Amer. Math. Soc.* 18:219 #9. Presented to a meeting of the AMS, New York City, 27–28 Dec 1911.

References to: AmMSc 2–4, WomWWA.
"Anna L. Van Benschoten." (Obituary) *Whittier News*, 19 Sep 1927.

Other sources: MS thesis vita 1900; Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library; Universitätsarchiv Göttingen, Niedersächische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek; communications with Whittier College Archives and with Whittier (CA) Public Library; US Census 1870, 1880, 1910 NY, 1900 IL.

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