

SUTTON, Flora Dobler. June 7, 1890–June 23, 1976.

GOUCHER COLLEGE (BA 1912), JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY (PhD 1921).

Flora Dobler Sutton, born in Baltimore, Maryland, was the daughter of Ann (or Annie) Elizabeth Dobler (1860–1928), of Baltimore, and John Robert Sutton (1858–1938), originally of Washington, D.C. Her parents married in 1886 and had seven children: Virginia (1887–1974), John R. Jr. (b. 1889), Flora D., Walter D. (1891–1970), Mary (1893–1994), Paul W. (b. 1894), and Franklin W. (1895–1978). All were born in Maryland, most likely in Baltimore, where the family lived. Her father was in the dry goods business.

Flora Dobler Sutton attended public schools in Baltimore and entered nearby Woman's College of Baltimore (Goucher College after 1910) immediately after her graduation from Western High School in 1908; she received her BA from Goucher in 1912. At that time the mathematics department was staffed by [Clara Latimer Bacon](#), who had come in 1897 and who was to receive her doctorate from Johns Hopkins in 1911, and by [Florence P. Lewis](#), who joined the faculty in 1908, and who was to receive her PhD, also from Johns Hopkins, in 1913.

In 1915, three years after graduating from Goucher, Sutton entered the Johns Hopkins University, where she took courses in mathematics, education, and statistics. At the time of her initial application for graduate study, she indicated that she did not expect to become a candidate for a degree. She did course work during the next six years, however, beginning with three hours per week in 1915–16 and six hours per week in 1916–17. She also attended summer school in 1919. Her mathematics courses included theory of functions, theory of numbers, theory of groups, elliptic modular functions, theory of probability, vector analysis, finite groups, and several in higher geometry. Her courses in education were taken during each of her first four years at Johns Hopkins. She took a course in statistical methods in the political economy department, and she enrolled in January 1920 as a special student in the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health to take additional courses in statistics. Her PhD dissertation in algebraic geometry was directed by Frank Morley, and the handwritten copy is dated 1920, although the degree was granted in June 1921.

During 1922–23 Sutton replaced an associate who was on leave from the Department of Biometry and Vital Statistics in the School of Hygiene and Public Health at Johns Hopkins. According to the announcement of her appointment in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, she had “for some time been connected with the Department in one capacity or another” (18 (1922): 401). At the time of the 1930 census Sutton was living at her family home in Baltimore with her widowed father, two sisters, and a brother; her occupation was given as substitute teacher in high school. She was still living at her family home when she applied in February 1936 to take graduate courses in the Department of Political Economy at Johns Hopkins. Courses taken there in 1936 included one on the interpretation of financial statements.

Sutton spent the major part of her career as a statistician for a stock brokerage firm in Baltimore that was known as Mackubin, Legg & Co. when she joined them, and is now Legg Mason, Inc.

Flora Sutton's brother, Walter, was a foreign missionary. In a letter that appears in the summer 1959 *Goucher Alumnae Quarterly* she described a recent trip to visit him in Southeast Asia. She reported, “Around the world by air in 35 days was a marvelous experience. There was a momentous decision to be made. Would it be safe for women, my two sisters, a sister-in-law and myself to visit Tavoy, Burma? A chapel was to be dedicated on Jan. 4, 1959, in memory of our missionary brother's wife, who died in India, whither they had fled because of the Japanese invasion” (p. 48). After consulting the State Department and the Missionary Board they decided to make the trip. On the way there,

they visited Copenhagen, Rome, Istanbul, the Taj Mahal, and Rangoon; their trip home passed through Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan.

Sutton had been retired for more than twenty years when she died at age eighty-six of cardio-respiratory arrest in the Armacost Nursing Home in Baltimore; she was buried in the Druid Ridge Cemetery in Baltimore and was survived by a sister and two brothers.

Dissertation:

1920 On certain chains of theorems in reflexive geometry. PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, directed by Frank Morley. Handwritten. Printed version, 1923, reprinted from *Amer. J. Math.* 45:122-44. PhD granted 1921.

Publication:

1923 On certain chains of theorems in reflexive geometry. *Amer. J. Math.* 45:122-44. Published version of PhD dissertation. Review: *JFM* 49.0424.03 (A. Barneck).

Reference to:

“Dr. Sutton, 86, Was Statistician.” *Baltimore Sun*, 3 Jul 1976.

Other sources: PhD dissertation vita 1920; Ferdinand Hamburger Archives, The Johns Hopkins University; communication with Goucher College Alumnae Association (via Rochelle Adler Effron); Cockey, “Mathematics at Goucher”; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 MD; Maryland death certificate; SSDI.

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