

YOUNG, Mabel M. July 18, 1872–March 4, 1963.

WELLESLEY COLLEGE (BA 1898), COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (TEACHERS COLLEGE) (MA 1899), JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY (PHD 1914).

Mabel Minerva Young was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, the daughter of Minerva (Tyler) (1847–1894) and Willie C. Young (1847–1909), both of Massachusetts. Her mother graduated from the Oread Institute, a private school and college for girls and women in Worcester, before her marriage in 1871. She was later described as musical. In 1880 the Youngs and their two daughters, Mabel, age seven, and Edith, age two, were living in Worcester with Willie Young's parents. Willie Young was a machinist and bookkeeper and later president of the W. C. Young Manufacturing Company that made machinists' tools. He was chairman of the school committee at the time of his wife's death and was a Republican member of the Massachusetts state legislature in 1896 and 1897. He remarried in 1897. Edith C. Young was in the Wellesley College class of 1900.

Mabel Young attended public schools in Worcester for her primary and secondary education. For the latter she completed a five-year course at Classical High School, from which she graduated as salutatorian. It was observed in a 1941 article in the *Wellesley Alumnae Magazine* that when she entered Wellesley College in 1894 she was unusually well prepared, especially in Greek, Latin, and mathematics, and that she had already decided on mathematics thanks to an excellent high school teacher.

During her four years at Wellesley, Young studied mainly English, mathematics, philosophy, and psychology before receiving her bachelor's degree in 1898. She spent the next year, 1898–99, at Columbia University, where she did work in education and psychology and earned her MA and a master's diploma in education from Teachers College, Columbia, in 1899.

Young taught in schools 1899–1904. In particular, from 1899 to 1902, she taught mainly English at the Northfield Seminary, a girls' preparatory school in Massachusetts. In 1904 she returned to Wellesley as an assistant in mathematics and was made an instructor in 1906. In 1904–08 she was enrolled in three hours a week of graduate courses in pure mathematics at Wellesley. At the same time, she was teaching one or two freshman sections each semester. Young did graduate work at Cornell University during the summer of 1908.

Young applied for admission to the Johns Hopkins University in the fall of 1909, was accepted, and was in residence there 1909–10 and again 1912–14, while she had leaves of absence from Wellesley 1909–11 and 1912–14. She was a fellow by courtesy at Johns Hopkins, with remission of tuition fees, 1913–14. Her dissertation in algebraic geometry was directed by Frank Morley. Morley and Abraham Cohen signed the recommendation for its acceptance on May 30, 1914: "The problem is solved completely; and the work is done carefully and understandingly. The style shows a cautious and critical New England intelligence" (Student files, Ferdinand Hamburger Archives, The Johns Hopkins University). Young received her doctorate in 1914 with physics as a first subordinate subject.

The remainder of Young's career was spent at Wellesley. She remained an instructor until 1919; she was assistant professor 1919–24, associate professor 1924–30, professor 1930–41, and emeritus professor after her retirement in 1941. During the year 1930–31 she traveled for six months in the Mediterranean region while on a leave of absence for study and travel.

Young was a charter member of the MAA and served on the arrangements committee for the first summer meeting of the MAA that was held at MIT in September 1916. Two years later she and [Helen Merrill](#), then chairman of the department at Wellesley, prepared the index for the 1918 volume of the *Monthly*. From the early 1920s through the early 1930s, Young was also a regular contributor of problems and solutions to the *Monthly*.

In 1932 Helen Merrill retired from Wellesley and the department chairmanship that she had held for sixteen years. The following year Young became department chairman and

remained so until her retirement. She was the Lewis Atterbury Stimson professor for some years. Her teaching at Wellesley included primarily geometry and statistics, although she preferred the theoretical to the more applied work.

Young's interests included music and travel. In addition to that noted above, she traveled in France and Germany in the summer of 1922 and in Norway and Sweden in the summer of 1936 when she attended the International Congress of Mathematicians in Oslo. In about 1940 she described herself as Congregational and a Republican. After her death in 1963 at age ninety in a nursing home in Wellesley, memorial services were held at the chapel on the Wellesley College campus.

Organizational affiliations: AMS, MAA (charter member), ASA, Hist. Sci. Soc., AAAS, AAUP, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi.

Thesis and dissertation:

1899 The aims and methods of the teaching of mathematics in the secondary schools of Germany and the United States. MA thesis, Columbia University.

1914 Dupin's cyclide as a self-dual surface. PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, directed by Frank Morley. Printed version, 1916, reprinted from *Amer. J. Math.* 38:267–86.

Publications:

1916 Dupin's cyclide as a self-dual surface. *Amer. J. Math.* 38:267–86. Published version of PhD dissertation. Reviews: *JFM* (W. Fr. Meyer) 46:998–99; *Rev. semestr. publ. math.* 25, pt. 1: 6 ([E. B. Cowley](#)).

1932 Helen Abbot Merrill. *Wellesley Alumnae Magazine* 16:405–6.

1933 Curves arising from a single infinity of triangles. *Amer. Math. Monthly* 40:196–202. Review: *JFM* 59.0589.01 (M. Zacharias).

1949 with [H. G. Russell](#) and [M. Stark](#). Helen A. Merrill, '86. *Wellesley Alumnae Magazine* 33:353–54.

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

“Mabel Minerva Young,” *Wellesley Alumnae Magazine* (June 1941).

“Mabel Minerva Young,” (obituary) *Wellesley Alumnae Magazine* (May 1963).

Other sources: PhD dissertation vita 1914; Owens questionnaire 1937; Ferdinand Hamburger Archives, The Johns Hopkins University; “Death of Mrs. Willie C. Young,” *Worcester Daily Telegram*, 22 Aug 1894; US Census 1880, 1900, 1930 MA.

Last modified: March 11, 2009.