

**TORREY, Marian M.** December 9, 1893–September 16, 1971.

BROWN UNIVERSITY (WOMEN'S COLLEGE) (BA 1916), BROWN UNIVERSITY (MA 1917), CORNELL UNIVERSITY (PhD 1924).

Marian Marsh Torrey was born in Malden, Massachusetts, the daughter of Anna Louise (Marsh), born in 1859 in Vermont, and Daniel Temple Torrey, born of missionary parents in 1859 in Fairfield, Indian Territory, in what was later northeastern Oklahoma. Her parents married in about 1890. Daniel T. Torrey, at one time a Congregational minister in Massachusetts, was by 1900 an insurance agent in Providence, Rhode Island, where Marian Torrey grew up. Four children were living in 1910 of seven that had been born by that time. The eldest, George Safford (1891–1977), received a bachelor's degree in 1913 and a master's degree in 1915 from Harvard and a *diplôme d'études supérieures* in botany from the University of Paris in 1919. He was a member of the botany faculty 1915–53 at Connecticut Agricultural College, which became the University of Connecticut in 1939. Marian Torrey's two younger sisters were Katharine Adelaide (1896–1990), who became a teacher, and Anna St. John (1897–1919).

Marian Torrey attended the Northfield Seminary, a preparatory school for girls in Massachusetts, 1909–12 before entering Women's College in Brown University in Providence. She graduated as a mathematics major in 1916. Torrey received the Emma Josephine Arnold fellowship of \$500 for 1916–17 to continue her studies at Brown and received her master's degree at the end of the year. Letters in the spring of 1917 make it clear that Torrey planned to take two or three years off before continuing her work towards a doctorate and an eventual career in college teaching. Among letters in response to inquiries from Raymond Clare Archibald of Brown about possible positions for Torrey was one on April 9 from A. E. Young of Miami University in Ohio, noting that “it is against our general policy to employ women in the Liberal Arts College” (R. G. D. Richardson Papers, Correspondence, Brown University Archives).

Torrey taught mathematics at the St. Johnsbury Academy in Vermont and then taught for two years at the Phebe Anna Thorne Model School at Bryn Mawr. While teaching at the Model School she also took two courses at Bryn Mawr College. She was then an instructor at West Virginia University 1920–23. While on the faculty there, she attended two summer quarters at the University of Chicago, the last in 1923 when she started a course with E. J. Wilczynski and planned to complete her studies at Chicago under his direction the following year. That summer Wilczynski's health forced him to give up teaching, and, at the suggestion of R. G. D. Richardson at Brown, Torrey wrote to Virgil Snyder at Cornell University to inquire about credit for her previous graduate work and the possibility of finishing her work at Cornell. She enrolled at Cornell in the fall of 1923 and received her PhD the following June with a minor in physics. Contact names at that time included her brother George Torrey, Richardson at Brown, and [Margaret Buchanan \(Cole\)](#) at West Virginia University.

On February 13, 1924, while Torrey was finishing her doctoral work at Cornell, R. G. D. Richardson at Brown wrote a letter in her behalf to [Ruth Goulding Wood](#) at Smith. In it, he said, “The department [at Brown] feels that we have never had, among the twenty or more girls whom we have sent out to teach in colleges, any stronger candidate. She comes from a cultured family, has a rare gift of getting along with people, and is very competent mathematically. . . . If Brown University would employ women, I would not hesitate to ask President Faunce to call her here at a good salary. She would do much better than many of the men whom we have at present on our staff” (R. G. D. Richardson Papers, Correspondence 1921–1925, Folder W, Brown University Archives).

After receiving her PhD, Torrey spent one year as an instructor at the University of Illinois before going to Goucher College as an instructor in 1925. She was promoted to assistant professor in 1927, to associate professor in 1932, and to professor in 1942. She

spent a sabbatical year, 1931–32, studying at Columbia University. While at Goucher she served as chairman of the department 1943–57; assistant to the dean for academic affairs 1937–43; and head of a resident dormitory, Baldwin House, 1942–59. She retired from Goucher in 1959. Goucher's annual banquet of the Mathematics Club and its prize for outstanding scholarship in mathematics are named in her honor.

Torrey began attending meetings of the MAA before she received her doctorate and continued attending for at least thirty years. She served as chair of the Maryland–District of Columbia–Virginia Section 1952–53 and on the arrangements committees for the annual meetings of the AMS and the MAA held at Johns Hopkins University in December 1953.

In the late 1930s Torrey described her church affiliation as Congregational. She mentioned renovating old houses as a hobby and listed bridge, bowling, and walking as favorite recreations. Torrey died in her apartment in Towson, Maryland, at the age of seventy-seven in 1971.

**Organizational affiliations:** AMS, MAA, IMS, Sigma Delta Epsilon, AAUP, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi.

**Dissertation:**

**1924** Classification of monoidal involutions having a fixed tangent cone. PhD dissertation, Cornell University, directed by Virgil Snyder. Typescript. Printed version, 1925, reprinted from *Amer. J. Math.* 47:181–206.

**Publications:**

**1925** Classification of monoidal involutions having a fixed tangent cone. *Amer. J. Math.* 47:181–206. Published version of PhD dissertation. Reviews: *JFM* 51.0490.03 (W. Fr. Meyer); *Rev. semestr. publ. math.* 32, pt. 1: 3 ([E. B. Cowley](#)).

**1932** Some properties of the fundamental curves of a birational transformation in space. *Amer. J. Math.* 54:305–13. Review: *JFM* 58.1222.01 (G. Feigl).

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

“Dr. Torrey, Former Goucher Professor, Dies at Age 77.” *Baltimore Sun*, 17 Sept 1971.

**Other sources:** Owens questionnaire 1940; Brown University Archives (R. G. D. Richardson Papers); Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library; Cockey, “Mathematics at Goucher”; US Census 1900, 1910, 1930 RI, 1930 MD.

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