

AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY
SEMICENTENNIAL PUBLICATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES

Volume One



FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY
1936

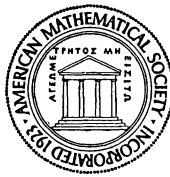
A SEMICENTENNIAL
HISTORY of the AMERICAN
MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY
1888-1938

with
Biographies and Bibliographies
of the Past Presidents

BY
RAYMOND CLARE ARCHIBALD

NEW YORK
AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY
1938

SEAL OF THE SOCIETY



Inscription over the door of

Plato's Academy:

ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσὶτω μοῦ τὴν στέγην

[Let no one unversed in geometry enter my doors]

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TO
THE MEMORY
OF
L. S. W.
W. T. W.

PREFACE

The preparation of the manuscript for this History during the past two years has been the most enjoyable piece of literary work which I have ever undertaken. It has seemed as if contacts with past enthusiasms, visions, largeness of outlook, and charm of personality, could still be established. All of the Society's Secretaries, twenty of its twenty-four Presidents, and many of the other officers and members, I have known fairly well, during a personal membership in the Society of thirty-five years, and attendance at sessions of its Council for the past twenty years. This association has been an uplifting experience; for surely nowhere else is there a body of disciples of mathesis more closely bound together; nowhere a Society with as large a number of individuals constantly making notable contributions to mathematical research; nowhere an organization in which gifted members, without money and without price, have more freely served it in various capacities, often for long periods of time, and at great personal sacrifice. It has been a matter of rare interest to survey records from the beginning, to delve into details, to observe the results of repeated decisions fraught with great wisdom, and to piece together information derived from many sources concerning the origin of various movements, or the achievements of some individual with reference to the mathematics of his time.

In order to give a definite, even though a very slight, suggestion as to the mathematical research of the outstanding men of the period 1888–1938, and to present an illuminating background for the history of the Society, condensed biographies and complete bibliographies (in almost every case) are brought together for the group of past Presidents of the Society. Only a small part of this material has earlier appeared in print, and then in an entirely different form.

As I have made a final survey of these pages, the feeling of complacency due to the pleasures derived from the collection of the material, and the composition, has been largely displaced by a conviction as to the great inadequacy of the historical record, for such an inspiring theme. Too late also I recognize serious blemishes in form.

At least, in depression, I can derive satisfaction by recalling, with gratitude, assistance freely furnished by many individuals. Specific reference may be made to only a few of them. The extensive work which Secretary Richardson has been carrying on for many years in connection with the Society's records often greatly simplified my progress, and on countless occasions he has been most helpful. Associate Secretary Ingraham placed at my disposal complete records of the Chicago Section (carefully prepared by Professors Holgate, Slaught and Dresden), and his

criticisms of first drafts of three chapters enabled me to present a more correct picture of certain things than would otherwise have been possible. Professor Jekuthiel Ginsburg most graciously loaned cuts from *Scripta Mathematica* for three of the illustrations. It is believed that at least twenty of the other illustrations have not been previously published. To the long list of services to the Society rendered by its friend Mr. S. A. Joffe, are now to be added his reading of all of my proof, and of much of my manuscript; his highly developed critical sense, and knowledge of foreign languages, made such aid especially valuable. In harmonizing the bibliographies and in other directions, Mrs. Elizabeth P. Green was an able collaborator.

The President of the Society and his living predecessors in office have been uniformly kind, for in connection with some of their research I never knew what I was writing about nor whether what I wrote was true. The store of extraordinarily accurate and vivid reminiscences of H. S. White, the ninth President, so prominent in the Society almost from the beginning, has been constantly drawn upon. From the thirteenth President, the late E. W. Brown, I received not only very interesting reminiscences, but also help with the Newcomb sketch. The sixteenth President, G. A. Bliss, went to endless trouble in meeting my frequently expressed desires for material connected with members of the Chicago Section. The abounding generosity of V. Snyder, the nineteenth President, was indicated by his offer to read all proof; numerous improvements were thus due to him. But especially am I indebted to the Society's Founder, who alone made possible the accurate accounts of many early events. In files are all of his correspondence and documents pertaining to the Society during the first fifteen years of its history; but on the tablets of his exceedingly retentive memory are rich supplementary data, concerning early days, activities and members of the Society.

R. C. A.

Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island
August, 1938

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AAAS, Amer. Assoc. Adv. Sci.
 AAAS, Amer. Acad. Arts and Sci.
Acta M., *Acta Mathematica*
AJ, *Astr. Journ.*
AJM, *Amer. Journ. Math.*
AJS, *Amer. Journ. Sci.*
AL Rend., Accademia dei Lincei, *Rendiconti*
AM, *Annals of Math.*
AMM, *Amer. Math. Mo.*
 AMS, Amer. Math. So.
AN, *Astronomische Nachrichten*
Annali M., *Annali di Matematica*
APAE, *Astr. Papers Amer. Ephemeris*
APS, *Proc.*, Amer. Phil So., *Proc.*
 ASA, Actuarial So. Amer.
ASP Pub., Astr. So. Pacific, *Publications*
 BAA, British Astr. Assoc.
 BAAS, British Assoc. Adv. Sci.
 C., College
CI Pub., Carnegie Inst., *Publication*
 CMP, Circolo Matematico di Palermo
 CMS, Calcutta Math. So.
Com. Mathem., *Compositio Mathematica*
 CPS, Cambridge Phil. So.
CR Paris, *Comptes Rendus*, Paris
DAB, *Dict. Amer. Biog.*
DB, *Bull. des Sci. Mathém.* (Darboux)
DMJ, *Duke Math. Journ.*
DMV Jahr., Deutsche Math. Vereinigung,
Jahresbericht
 ed., edited, edition, editor, educational
Ed. Rev., *Educational Review*
 EMS, Edinburgh Math. So.
ETR, *Ed. Times Reprints*
FM, *Fundamenta Mathematicae*
 for., foreign
Giorn. M., *Giornale di Matematiche*
GN, *Göttingen Nachrichten*
 hon., honorary
 ICT Math., Intern. Commission Teach. Math
IHP Ann., Inst. Henri Poincaré, *Annales*
 JHU, The Johns Hopkins U.
 LMS, London Math. So.
MA, *Mathematische Annalen*
 MAA, Math. Assoc. Amer.
MM, *Messenger of Math.*
MM P, *Monatshefte f. Math. u. Phys.*
MT, *Mathematics Teacher*
MZ, *Mathematische Zeitschrift*
 NAL, Accademia Pontifica dei Nuovi Lincei
 NAS, Nat. Acad. Sci.
 NRC, Nat. Research Council
 n.s., new series
 NYMS, New York Math. So.
 p., page or pages
 P, President
P. Mat., *Periodico di Matematica*
PA Sitz., Preussische Acad., *Sitz.*
QJM, *Quarterly Journ. Math.*
QJMO, *Quarterly Journ. Math.*, Oxford series
RAS MN, Roy. Astr. So., *Monthly Notices*
RI Pamphlets, Rice Institute, *Pamphlets*
 RS London, Royal So. London
SMF Bull., So. Math. de France, *Bull.*
SNSP Annali, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa
Annali
 SPEE, So. Promotion Engin. Ed.
 U., University
 v., volume or volumes
 VP, Vice-president