A 1930's Review of Secondary and Collegiate Mathematics as Taught in Indiana

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The twelfth meeting of the Indiana MAA Section took place on Friday, May 3rd, and Saturday, May 4th, of 1935. Hanover College hosted the meeting events, which included a Friday evening dinner at the Inn at Clifty Falls State Park, followed by after-dinner presentations, and a Saturday morning paper session on the Hanover campus.

The beautiful setting of Clifty Falls State Park and the Hanover area along the Ohio River must have provided a wonderful backdrop for the meeting. Readers interested in seeing the scenic setting for this meeting can open the link below, which features a photo display. A view of the "Clifty

Inn" as it would have appeared in 1935 is among the first few images shown!

It is clear from the official meeting report [1] that the program was designed to provide a revealing set of talks on the history, development, difficulties, and concerns associated with secondary and collegiate mathematics education in Indiana.

The Friday evening after-dinner presentations were delivered by members of the Purdue University Mathematics Department. The lead address was presented by Professor T. E. Mason and was entitled "Is there a popular appeal in mathematics?" This presentation was followed by eight contributed papers, each of which offered a suggestion for stimulating popular interest in mathematics. Some of the interesting titles include "Driving across the solar system," "As we number our days," "The gambler's chance," and "String figures."

Five speakers presented talks at the Saturday morning paper session. The opening address, offered by Professor S. C. Davisson of Indiana University, was entitled "Reminiscences of forty-four years as a teacher of mathematics." The second through fourth talks included "What about mathematics in the junior high school? One answer" by Vivian R. Ely of George Washington High School; "Mathematics as a personal experience" by Professor P. P. Boyd of the University of Kentucky; and "Problems in

the training of teachers of mathematics" by Professor L. H. Whitcraft of Ball State Teachers College.

The final presentation of the session was delivered by Professor W. E. Edington of DePauw University and was entitled "Early Indiana mathematics and mathematicians." The content of this talk provides a revealing overview of collegiate mathematics in Indiana from 1820 to 1912. We conclude with the summary of Professor Edington's talk provided in [1]:

"Professor Edington traced the development of mathematics in Indiana during the nineteenth century. Indiana University, Hanover College, Wabash College, Franklin College, and DePauw University were all founded between 1820 and 1840, the latter four being strictly sectarian in organization and intent at the time of their founding. The presidents and many of the professors of all five institutions were for many years preachers, the work offered was classical, and the mathematics offered was most elementary since there were no high schools and few academies to prepare students for college. However, fluxions or calculus was offered before 1850, but the number of students taking such work was small, and, as in the east, mathematics was taught as a preparation for astronomy. In 1856 a scientific course of three years in which mathematics was stressed was organized at Indiana University, but it was 1868 before this became a standard four year course and the formal choice of a major subject was not declared until 1887. The first Master's degree with mathematics as the major subject was given at Indiana University in 1888 and the first

Ph.D. with mathematics as the major was given in 1912. The development in the other colleges was parallel to that of Indiana University."

Readers interested in learning more about the meeting and the presentations should take a look at [1], which includes a registration list, notes on the business meeting, and brief abstracts of all talks presented.

References

[1] P. D. Edwards, *The May Meeting of the Indiana Section*, The American Mathematical Monthly **42**, No. 10, (December1935), pp. 587-590.