

MAA Southern California Spring Meeting
University of California, Los Angeles
March 4, 2000

LOOKING BACK 75 YEARS

With this meeting, the Southern California Section of the Mathematical Association of America is proud to celebrate its 75th anniversary. The Section had its beginnings at a luncheon meeting in November 1924 where:

Upon invitation of Professor E. R. Hedrick and a few other members of the American Mathematical Association, forty-one teachers of mathematics of Southern California met in the dining room of the City Club of Los Angeles at 12 o'clock, Nov. 22, 1924.

After partaking of a bountiful lunch, the meeting was organized by electing Professor Hedrick of the University of California, Southern Branch, Temporary Chairman and Professor W. P. Russell of Pomona College, as Temporary Secretary.

The chairman made a few remarks, calling attention to the fact that there are more members of the Association in this vicinity than there are in the whole state of Kansas, and raised the question as to whether we should try to organize a section of the Association.

The schools represented at this organization meeting were the University of Redlands, Occidental College, Caltech, UCLA (then University of California, Southern Branch), USC, San Diego Junior College, Fullerton Junior College, Pomona College, Whittier College, Long Beach High School, and Pasadena High School.

The group present passed a motion to form a committee, consisting of the two temporary officers and O. W. Albert of the University of Redlands, "to prepare a constitution, nominate permanent officers, and to take up the matter with the national organization."

On February 28, 1925, the Section held its first meeting, again at the City Club, with forty-six participants, beginning with another "bountiful luncheon," followed by a business meeting and a hour-long program of five papers. The proposed constitution was adopted, having previously been approved by the national organization. Harry Bateman of Caltech was elected Chairman, H. C. Willett of USC Vice-Chairman, and Paul Daus of UCLA Secretary-Treasurer. (Professor Daus held this position until 1958!)

The second meeting of the Section was held on November 7, 1925 at the University of Southern California and featured a luncheon at the Women's Residence Hall followed by an hour and twenty minute program of six talks. In the featured talk, "Modern Methods in Machine Mathematics," Clyde Wolf of Caltech "discussed the use of the calculating machine and suggested improvements that were desirable for certain types of calculations."

The third meeting of the Section, held on March 13, 1926 at Caltech, featured the first invited address, "A Demonstrative Talk on Lightning Phenomena" by R. W. Sorenson of Caltech, which featured "a series of highly interesting experiments" in the high tension laboratory.

Over the next two decades, the talks grew slowly but steadily in length, number, and variety. At the eighth meeting in November 1928, W. L. Hart of the University of Minnesota spoke on "Conservative new-type examinations for college mathematics and their coefficient of reliability." The eleventh meeting at Occidental College in March 1931 featured H. Bateman of Caltech speaking on "The contributions of clergymen to the sciences of aerodynamics and hydrodynamics," and at the sixteenth meeting at Fullerton Junior College in March 1936, E. T. Bell of Caltech spoke on "Characteristics of Mathematicians."

At the twentieth meeting at Compton Junior College in March 1940, the program was long enough for both morning and afternoon sessions. The attendance at this meeting was 85, the largest to date.

At the time of the twenty-second meeting in March 1942, the needs of the military played a prominent role in the program. Participants heard a report from the War Department on academic pre-training for aviation cadets. The recommendations for coursework included 25 class hours in algebra, 40 class hours in plane trigonometry and logarithms, 25 class hours in solid geometry, and 10 hours in spherical trigonometry. The recommendations stated that “The emphasis on theory should be limited to the minimum amount which is essential if the student is to appreciate the content of the course. Numerical applications should be emphasized whenever possible.”

At the March 1952 meeting held at Occidental College, the fact that “approximately two-thirds of the people teaching arithmetic in the ninth and tenth grades” had neither a teaching major nor a teaching minor in mathematics prompted a resolution of both the Northern and Southern Sections to require all secondary and elementary credential candidates to “demonstrate competence in arithmetic and in the teaching of arithmetic.” The resolution was passed without dissent.

The March 1958 meeting at Pasadena City College featured the talk “The Mathematics of Tracking Satellites” by Samuel E. Benesch of Caltech and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, as well as a panel discussion on “Implications for College Mathematics Departments of the Offering of Sections in Mathematical Analysis in the Senior High Schools.”

The March 1965 meeting at Claremont Men’s College featured a panel discussion on “The New Mathematics—Boon or Boondoggle.” Computers started featuring into some of the talks as early as March 1966 with the talk “A Role for the Computer in a Liberal Arts College” by John Ferling of Claremont Men’s College. A few years later, the March 1971 meeting at San Fernando State College featured the talk “The Use of Computers in Teaching Mathematics” by James Berquist of the IBM Corporation, followed the next year by “Use of the Computer to Enhance Instruction in Freshman Calculus and Physics,” by W. D. Gibson of Santa Ana College.

FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SECTION

O. W. Albert, University of Redlands	W. P. Russell, Pomona College
E. E. Allen, Occidental College	G. E. F. Sherwood, UCLA
Harry Bateman, Caltech	H. M. Showman, UCLA
May M. Beenken, UCLA	Marcus Skarstedt, Whittier College
Mr. and Mrs. T. Clark, USC	D. V. Steed, USC
Mytrie Collier, UCLA	F. C. Touton, USC
Mae E. Conn, USC	H. C. Van Buskirk, Caltech
P. H. Daus, UCLA	H. C. Willett, USC
Harriet E. Glazier, UCLA	Clyde Wolf, Caltech
E. R. Hedrick, UCLA	E. R. Worthington, UCLA
H. C. Hicks, Caltech	W. A. Bartlett
G. H. Hunt, UCLA	Joseph Goldberg
Glenn James, UCLA	Miss Harrod
Mary N. Keith, University of Redlands	Claire Hornley
G. R. Livingston, San Diego Junior College	F. C. Leonard
Deca Lodwick, Fullerton Junior College	H. P. Robertson
Ada McClellan, Long Beach High School	Miss Shepardson
Boris Podolsky, USC	P. W. Stoner, Pasadena High School
Lena E. Reynolds, Fullerton Junior College	

Mathematical Association of America

(INCORPORATED)

Southern California Section

FIRST MEETING

Los Angeles, Saturday, February 28, 1925

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The first meeting of the Southern California Section of the Mathematical Association of America will be held at the CITY CLUB, 833 S. Spring Street, Los Angeles, and will begin with a luncheon at 12 noon, which will be followed by a business meeting and a program of five papers. Luncheon, \$1 a plate. Make your reservations on enclosed post card and return to Professor H. Bateman, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, not later than Wednesday, February 25.

PROGRAM

Program Committee: H. BATEMAN, California Institute of Technology, *Chairman*; G. E. F. SHERWOOD, University of California, Southern Branch; H. C. WILLETT, University of Southern California.

12:00 Noon, Luncheon, then a Business Meeting to be followed by the Five Papers listed below:

- 1.—“Contrast between the two Methods of expressing Symmetric Functions in terms of the Coefficients of the corresponding Algebraic Equation.” PROFESSOR O. W. ALBERT, University of Redlands. (10 minutes.)
- 2.—“Note on a Table of Discounts.” PROFESSOR P. H. DAUS, University of California, Southern Branch. (5 minutes.)
- 3.—“A Solution of the Quintic Equation.” PROFESSOR GLENN JAMES, University of California, Southern Branch. (20 minutes.)
- 4.—“Mathematics of Fluid Convection as the Mechanism of Heat Conduction in large bodies of Water.” PROFESSOR GEORGE F. McEWEN, Scripps Institution, University of California. (10 minutes.)
- 5.—“The Generalized Pellian Equation.” PROFESSOR CLYDE WOLFE, California Institute of Technology. (10 Minutes.)