

WILLIAM FOGG OSGOOD—IN MEMORIAM

With the death on July 22, 1943, of William Fogg Osgood, the American Mathematical Society has lost a beloved and distinguished member, and The Fraternity of Science a most faithful comrade.

William Fogg Osgood was born in Boston on March 10, 1864, the only child surviving beyond infancy of Dr. William Osgood, a physician and fourth in an unbroken line of that profession, and of Mary Rogers (Gannett) Osgood of Milton, Massachusetts. Both Osgoods and Gannetts were old New England families, the earliest American Osgood in the mathematician's line being John Osgood (1595–1651) who came to Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1638 from Wherwell, near Andover (Hampshire), England, where the family's freehold seems to have antedated the Conquest. On the same side of the family, Osgood was a great great grandson of General Joseph Otis, the brother of James Otis the patriot.

Osgood attended the Boston Latin School, and entered Harvard in 1882, whence he graduated in 1886 *summa cum laude* with highest honors in mathematics and the second in a class numbering 286. In school his education had been centered in the classics, and at Harvard the study of the Greek authors formed a large part of his program; indeed he received second year honors in classics. But before long his interest in the experimental and mathematical sciences was aroused by his teachers at Harvard, most of all by his distant kinsman Benjamin Osgood Peirce; and his intention to devote his life to mathematics became established. After obtaining the A.M. in 1887, he received a travelling fellowship, and spent two years in Göttingen and a year at Erlangen where he obtained his Ph.D. (1890). He was awarded an L.L.D. by Clark University in 1909.

Osgood was married in 1890 to Therese Ruprecht (deceased) of Göttingen, and returned to become an instructor in the department of mathematics at Harvard (1890–93). He served there as assistant professor (1893–1903) and as professor (1903–33), and became professor emeritus in 1933. He was the father of three children: Dr. William Ruprecht Osgood of the Bureau of Standards, Mrs. Freda Osgood Silz (deceased), and Dr. Rudolph Osgood, a physician of Fall River, Massachusetts. In 1932 Osgood was married to Mrs. Céleste Phelps Morse. During 1934–36 he was visiting professor of mathematics at the National University of Peking. From 1936 until his death he lived in Belmont, Massachusetts.

Osgood was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1904. He was the eighth president of the American Mathematical Society