

ARTHUR BYRON COBLE

BY ARTHUR MATTUCK

Professor Arthur Byron Coble, who was active in the American Mathematical Society from 1912 to 1940, and its president in 1933–1934, died on December 8, 1966. Most of his professional work was done at the University of Illinois, and on April 1, 1968, the Urbana Senate recorded a memorial tribute to him which is reproduced here as an account of his life and interests. A description of his mathematical work has been added.

“Arthur Byron Coble was born in Williamstown, Pennsylvania in 1878. He completed his undergraduate studies at Gettysburg College in 1899 and received the Ph.D. degree from the Johns Hopkins University in 1902. During the academic year 1902–1903, he was an instructor at the University of Missouri, and he spent the following year in Germany as a Carnegie research assistant. He returned to Johns Hopkins in 1904 and remained there until 1918 when he was appointed Professor of Mathematics on this campus. Except for 1927–1928, which he spent at Johns Hopkins, he remained here until his retirement in 1947.

“Although he had little inclination for administrative responsibilities, he came to accept them as a necessary component of his work. From 1933 to 1947, he was head of the Department of Mathematics, and during these years he served on many University and College Committees, including eleven years on the University Council and eight years on the Executive Committee of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He brought to these committees the calm judgment and the methodical analysis that characterized his work in other areas.

“Doing mathematics, however, was his prime pleasure. His first published paper appeared in 1901, and during the next four decades, in more than sixty articles and monographs, he developed his ideas and opened new areas of investigation. His work earned him distinction as a mathematician and pre-eminence in algebraic geometry, the area of his investigations. He received many honors from his professional colleagues. In 1928, he gave, by invitation, the Colloquium Lectures at the annual summer meeting of the American Mathematical Society, and his book *Algebraic Geometry and Theta Functions*, is Volume 10 of the Society's Colloquium Publications. In this book Professor Coble presents a very general and important