

## **Mary J. Hartmann (1845-1932)**

Mary J. Hartmann was born on October 13, 1845, on a farm in Franklin Township, Washington County, Indiana. She was the daughter of Jacob and Susan Hartmann. When she was five, her family moved to a farm near Fairfield, Iowa. They later moved to Galesburg, Illinois, where Mary graduated from Lombard College in 1869 with a bachelor's degree and earned a master's degree in 1888. Unfortunately, Lombard College closed during the Great Depression, with its last graduating class in 1930.

In 1870, Mary began teaching high school in Galva, Illinois. By 1880, she was teaching in Marshalltown, Iowa, and in 1881, she moved to Winona, Minnesota, to teach college mathematics. In 1882, she became an assistant mathematics teacher at Illinois State Normal University (ISNU), where she taught for the next 27 years, retiring in 1909.

At ISNU, Mary was known for her high standards and for requiring her students to think clearly and logically. Her students knew to come to class well-prepared, and she was admired for her fairness and sense of humor. Many of her students appreciated how she helped them become good teachers who could think critically and communicate effectively.

In 1874, the ISNU Board decided that women should be given more teaching positions, but this did not happen. Mary Hartmann never became a full professor, though one of her former students remembered her friendly rivalry with Professor Felmlay, where she would challenge him with tough math problems. Another former student praised her sharp business sense, saying a banker once called her the "best businessman on the faculty."

Mary was also involved in the Sapphonian Literary Society, which she helped found in 1887. This group studied art, literature, travel, and music, and engaged in debates and discussions with a men's group called the Ciceronian Society. This gave women an opportunity to compete with men in an intellectual setting.

In addition to her work with the literary society, Mary was one of the directors of the Men's Glee Club at ISNU, which was formed in 1899. The club performed their first concert in 1899, and Mary played an important role in its success.

After retiring in 1909, Mary remained active in the community through her involvement in several organizations, such as the Unitarian Church, the Bloomington-Normal Woman's Club, and the Red Cross during World War I. She also stayed connected to ISNU by attending events there.

Mary never married, which allowed her to focus on her career, her community work, and her many friendships. After being struck by an automobile in 1928, Mary's health began to fail. She passed away on December 16, 1932. Her ashes were scattered over her mother's grave in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, Bloomington, Illinois.