

Women *in* NBS/NIST History



J. Virginia Lincoln

Lincoln joined NIST in 1942 as a physicist specializing in radio propagation and ionospheric research. She is widely known for co-authoring the McNish-Lincoln sunspot-cycle prediction method. In 1959 Lincoln was appointed chief of the Radio Warning Services Division, becoming first woman to reach the Division Chief level at NIST.



Charlotte E. Moore-Sitterly

Moore-Sitterly was considered the foremost authority on atomic and spectral data. Her invaluable tabulations of atomic energy levels and spectral multiplet tables, completed at NIST between 1945-1971, had influence on every branch of physics and chemistry, and made her one of the best known female atomic physicists of her time.

Edith L.R. Corliss



Corliss was a Physicist at NIST from 1941-1980. Her fundamental metrology work on sound led to an understanding of bone conduction of sound in the human ear, key work to the proper diagnosis of hearing problems and for hearing aid design. She wrote widely circulated technical reports on the calibration of hearing related devices, as well as popular guides for the general public on the selection and use of hearing aids.

Davis was a chemist at NIST from 1941-1968. She was an authority on acid-base behavior in organic solvents. She developed methods for measuring the overall and relative acidity and basicity in nonaqueous systems, receiving many awards and much recognition for this work.



Marion M. Davis

Lola S. Deming



Lola S. Deming

Deming was a NIST mathematician from 1943-1963. She was one of four initial members of the Statistical Engineering Laboratory. While officially only responsible for preparing the manuscripts of her lab, she nevertheless also lent her mathematical expertise to a NIST comprehensive study of women's body measurements used to develop a sizing standard for women's ready-to-wear clothing, as well as compiled and published bibliographies on important statistical topics.

Sarah Ann Jones



Jones was the second Head Librarian of the NIST library from 1938-1966. She grew the NIST library collection from a small set of books on weights and measures inherited from the Coast and Geodetic Survey into, according to a 1966 New York Times article, "the finest physical science library in existence anywhere". In addition, she published a historical summary of early Congressional actions on weights and measures standardization, stood up to questioning by the House Un-American Activities Committee, and helped to advise the World War II Office of Strategic Services on collecting and disseminating then-embargoed German and French scientific periodicals needed in the U.S. to aid with war research efforts.

Frush was a chemist at NIST from 1929 -1968. One of her early achievements was the perfection of electrolytic oxidation of glucose, which would become an important commercial process. Later in her career she developed methods for the synthesis, analysis and study of position labeled radioactive carbohydrates, which are used in biological and medical research to determine the fate of individual atoms in complex chemical processes.

Harriet L. Frush



Irene A. Stegun



Stegun was a mathematician at NIST from 1944 -1983. She co-authored the Handbook of Mathematical Functions (NIST Applied Mathematics Series 55), which is considered the most comprehensive source for information on special mathematical functions used in applied mathematics. Stegun is also remembered for her early application of the power of electronic computers to solve complicated science and engineering problems.



Ida Rhodes

Rhodes, a NIST mathematician and computer expert from 1940-1975, was instrumental in designing programming language for electronic computers. She designed the C-10 language used by one of the earliest computers, the UNIVAC 1. She also worked on computer translation of Russian, gave lectures to Government agencies and private firms to promote the computer's ability to make their work more efficient, and taught computer coding to people with physical disabilities.



Gertude Blanch

Blanch was a mathematician with NIST from 1938-1954. As head of a NIST sponsored human computing project, she led a group of unemployed office workers with no formal training in mathematics who nevertheless produced complex mathematical tables for some of the most important research projects of their time, including the Loran Radio Navigation system, efficient bombing strategies for D-Day Invasion of France, and the Manhattan Project. She then joined the Computing Lab of the Applied Mathematics Division where she helped to build the first electronic computers and become an early expert in the field of numerical analysis.

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