

VIRGINIA TUCKER

Biographical Data: Born in Hertford, North Carolina

Education: Graduated University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a degree in Mathematics, 1931

NACA/NASA Experience: Hired in 1935 as a member of the first Computing Pool; Overall Supervisor for Computing by 1946

Virginia Tucker first received notice of her appointment at Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory while vacationing in California. A former high school teacher, she arrived the day after Labor Day 1935 to join four other women in Langley's first "Computer Pool." Born and raised in Hertford, North Carolina, Tucker attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (at that time a woman's college) and graduated with a degree in Mathematics in 1931. Following graduation, she took the Civil Service exam to apply for a job with the federal government. Four years later, she was offered the computing job at NACA.

In a 1946 interview with the Langley newsletter *Air Scoop*, Tucker recalled there being "a serious woman shortage here at Laboratory...with only twenty-five members of the fairer sex on the staff" when she arrived in 1935. During World War II, however, the number of female staff members, as well as the number of human computers at Langley expanded rapidly. In addition to her computing work, Tucker herself helped recruit many women who became computers, traveling to universities and women's colleges across the South. By 1946, as the Overall Supervisor for Computing, Tucker presided over a vastly expanded department that had trained about 400 women and placed them in computing sections across the facility. Tucker also enjoyed traveling, and toured Panama, Havana, and Costa Rica in 1939.

Sources:

Profile in the Langley newsletter: Virginia Tucker, "What's my Name?" *Air Scoop* June 14, 1946.