



Miriam Daniel Mann was born in Covington, GA on July 25, 1907. Her father was a barber and her mother was a school teacher. My mother grew up in Macon, GA and finished high school at an all girls Prep school named Ballard where she was the valedictorian of her class. She graduated from Talladega College in Talladega, AL with a major in chemistry and a minor in mathematics. After teaching school a few years, she married William S. Mann, Jr. and had three children while they lived in Savannah, GA. In 1942 the family moved to Virginia where Bill Mann became a professor at Hampton Institute (now University).

In 1943 my mother heard about NACA looking to hire computers. It is interesting that the original "colored" computers were required to take a course in chemistry at Hampton Institute which upon successful completion, they were hired. These were the West Area Colored Computers. In the early days at the height of WWII NACA worked 24 hours a day. This meant everyone worked shifts, 7a.m. til 3 p. m., 3 p. m. til 11 p. m. and 11 p. m. til 7 a.m. This was a very different household where it was the norm for mothers to stay home. It was expected that once the war was over that would end her working days, but that was not to be.

My early memories are of my mother talking about doing math problems all day. Back then all of the math was done with a #2 pencil and the aid of a slide rule. I remember the talk of plotting graphs, logs, doing equations and all sorts of foreign sounding terms. She would relate stories about the "colored" sign on a table in the back of the cafeteria. She brought the first one home, but there was a replacement the next day. New signs went up on the bathroom door, "colored girls". I remember her first supervisor was Marge Hannah, white of course, but I don't remember her speaking negatively about her. I remember for some special occasion Marge invited "her" computer to her apartment. That was quite unusual for the times.

I remember when my mother was excited when the first real computer was installed and it was larger than today's walk in closets. Once the war was over, security wasn't as rigid which allowed us kids to get tours of the wind tunnels and see some of the actual planes that they did the math for. When NACA became NASA my Mom worked on John Glenn's flight ship and was present when he came to show his appreciation for all their work.

After becoming a widow she continued to work. My mother retired from NASA in late 1966 because of ill health and passed in May 1967.

Miriam D. Mann left a legacy of children and grandchildren that were all contributors to society. Her youngest son Thomas died serving in the air force in 1963. Her oldest son William S. Mann, III is still working for FHA (Federal Housing Authority) as an architectural inspector since 1962. Daughter, Miriam M. Harris is a retired legal assistance. She has seven grand children, one is a retired public school teacher and now with a Doctorate of Ministry teaches at a Bible college, another is in his 31st year with the U S Army in Special Forces, two are librarians with masters in library science, one works for the Department of Corrections since he finished VCU, another is a nurse practitioner and the last grand is a college professor and holds PhD and JD.

*Provided by Miriam Mann Harris, only daughter to Miriam D. Mann, 9-12-2011*