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Steve Batterson* (sb@mathcs.emory.edu). *American Mathematics 1890 to 1913: From Approximate Nullity to the Verge of Parity with Europe*. Preliminary report.

Oswald Veblen wrote of Henry Fine: “Fine was one of the group of men who carried American mathematics forward from a state of approximate nullity to one verging on parity with European nations.” Veblen did not specify any time frame for this advance. However, in his 1913 tour of Europe, Veblen concluded that America’s best mathematicians were competitive with those at Göttingen, excepting David Hilbert. This was the year that George D. Birkhoff published his seminal proof of Poincaré’s Geometric Theorem. The mathematics departments at Harvard, Chicago, and Princeton then were turning out high level research and graduate students.

While American mathematics did have a few successes spread through the nineteenth century, in 1890 its standing was low and its prospects were bleak. Then, in consecutive years, William Fogg Osgood and Maxime Bôcher were appointed to faculty positions at Harvard, and E. H. Moore was selected to lead the subject at the University of Chicago. What they accomplished individually, together, and with others set a new course for American mathematics.

In this talk I will defend its title and discuss the transformation. (Received July 25, 2013)