

Pacific Journal of Mathematics

**ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF SOME GENERALIZED
SQUARE-FULL INTEGERS**

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Let a and b be fixed positive integers. Let $n = p_1^{a_1} p_2^{a_2} \cdots p_r^{a_r}$ be the canonical representation of $n > 1$ and let $R_{a,b}$ denote the set of all n with the property that each exponent $a_i (1 \leq i \leq r)$ is either a multiple of a or is contained in the progression $at + b, t \geq 0$. It is clear that $R_{2,3} = L$, the set of square-full integers; that is, the set of all n with property that each prime factor of n divides n to at least the second power. Thus the elements of $R_{a,b}$ may be called generalized square-full integers. This generalization of square-full integers has been given by E. Cohen in 1963, who also established asymptotic formulae for $R_{a,b}(x)$, the enumerative function of the set $R_{a,b}$, in various cases. In this paper, we improve the 0-estimates of the error terms in the asymptotic formulae for $R_{a,b}(x)$ established by E. Cohen in some cases and further improve them on the assumption of the Riemann hypothesis.

1. Introduction. An integer $n > 1$ is called square-full if in the canonical representation of n into prime powers each exponent is ≥ 2 . Let L denote the set of square-full integers. Let x denote a real variable ≥ 1 and let $L(x)$ denote the number of square-full integers $\leq x$. For the work done on the asymptotic formula for $L(x)$ or for $L_k(x)$, the number of k -full integers $\leq x$ (an integer $n > 1$ is called k -full, if in the canonical representation of n each exponent $\geq k$) we refer to the bibliography given by E. Cohen [2] and by E. Cohen and K. J. Davis [3]. In particular, for the best known results on the 0-estimates of the error term in the asymptotic formula for $L(x)$, we refer to the paper by the author and R. Sita Rama Chandra Rao [7] and also to the recent paper by the author [8].

In 1963, E. Cohen [1] generalized square-full integers in the following way: Let a and b be fixed positive integers. Let $n = p_1^{a_1} p_2^{a_2} \cdots p_r^{a_r}$ and let $R_{a,b}$ denote the set of all integers n with the property that each exponent $a_i (1 \leq i \leq r)$ is either a multiple of a or is contained in the progression $at + b, t \geq 0$. It is clear that $R_{2,3} = L$. Let $r_{a,b}$ denote the characteristic function of the set $R_{a,b}$; that is, $r_{a,b}(n) = 1$ or 0 according as $n \in R_{a,b}$ or $n \notin R_{a,b}$. Also, let $R_{a,b}(x)$ denote the number of integers $n \leq x$ such that $n \in R_{a,b}$. The following results have been established by E. Cohen (cf. [1], Theorems 2.1, 3.1 and 3.2):

If $a < 2b$, $b \not\equiv 0 \pmod{a}$, then

$$(1.1) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \alpha^* x^{1/a} + \beta^* x^{1/b} + \begin{cases} 0(x^{1/(a+b)}) \\ 0(x^{1/2b}) \end{cases},$$

according as $b > a$ or $b < a$; if $a > 2b$, then

$$(1.2) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \beta^* x^{1/b} + 0(x^{1/2b}),$$

the constants α^* and β^* are defined by

$$(1.3) \quad \alpha^* = \zeta(b/a)/\zeta(2b/a) \quad \text{and} \quad \beta^* = \zeta(a/b)/\zeta(2),$$

where $\zeta(s)$ is the Riemann Zeta function defined by $\zeta(s) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} n^{-s}$ for $s > 1$ and

$$(1.4) \quad \zeta(s) = \frac{s}{s-1} - s \int_1^{\infty} (t - [t])t^{-s-1} dt \quad \text{for} \quad 0 < s < 1.$$

If $2a > b > a$, $b \not\equiv 0 \pmod{a}$, then for $x \geq 2$,

$$(1.5) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \alpha^* x^{1/a} + \beta^* x^{1/b} + \begin{cases} 0(x^{1/2b}) \\ 0(x^{1/2b} \log^2 x) \\ 0(x^{1/3a} \log x) \end{cases},$$

according as $3a > 2b$, $3a = 2b$ or $3a < 2b$.

If $b > a$, $b \not\equiv 0 \pmod{a}$, then for $x \geq 2$,

$$(1.6) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \alpha^* x^{1/a} + \beta^* x^{1/b} + \begin{cases} 0(x^{1/2b}) \\ 0(x^{1/2b} \log x) \\ 0(x^{2/(2b+5a)}) \end{cases},$$

according as $2b < 5a$, $2b = 5a$ or $2b > 5a$.

The object of this paper is to improve the 0-estimates of the error terms in the above asymptotic formulae for $R_{a,b}(x)$ applying the method adopted in [6] or [7] and the results due to H.-E. Richert [5] on the divisor problem for $\tau_{a,b}(n)$, namely

$$(1.7) \quad \sum_{n \leq x} \tau_{a,b}(n) = \zeta(b/a)x^{1/a} + \zeta(a/b)x^{1/b} + 0(x^{\theta}),$$

where $\tau_{a,b}(n) = \sum_{d^a \delta^b = n} 1$, the summation being taken over all ordered pairs (d, δ) of positive integers d and δ such that $d^a \delta^b = n$. It is known that $\theta \leq 2/(3a + 3b)$ or $\theta \leq 2/(5a + 2b)$, according as $b < 2a$ or $b > 2a$. These results on the upper bound of θ have been established by H.-E. Richert (cf. [5], Satz 2). As for as the lower bound of θ is concerned, it is known that $\theta \geq 1/(2a + 2b)$ and this result has been established by E. Krätzel (cf. [4], Satz 7).

The improvements in the 0-estimates of the error terms are

given in Theorem 3.1, Remark 3.1, Theorem 3.3 and Remark 3.3, which are further improved on the assumption of the Riemann hypothesis in Theorem 3.2, Remark 3.2, Theorem 3.4 and Remark 3.4.

Finally, we mention that applying the method adopted here, together with the results of H.-E. Richert and E. Krätzel stated above, we can improve the 0-estimates of the error terms in Theorems 3.1 and 3.2 of E. Cohen [2] also. In fact, he [2] establishes in Theorem 3.1, an asymptotic formula for the enumerative function of the set $S_{a,b}$ (when $b > a > 1$, $(a, b) = 1$), which like $R_{a,b}$ reduces to L when $a = 2$ and $b = 3$.

2. Preliminaries. In this section we state some lemmas which have been established already and which we need in our present discussion. First, we state the following best known estimate concerning the average of the Möbius function $\mu(n)$ established by Arnold Walfisz [10]:

LEMMA 2.1 (cf. [10], Satz 3, p. 191). For $x \geq 3$,

$$(2.1) \quad M(x) = \sum_{n \leq x} \mu(n) = O(x\delta(x)),$$

where

$$(2.2) \quad \delta(x) = \exp \{-A \log^{3/5} x (\log \log x)^{-1/5}\},$$

A being a positive absolute constant.

LEMMA 2.2 (cf. [6], Lemma 2.2). For $x \geq 3$ and any $s > 1$,

$$(2.3) \quad \sum_{n \leq x} \frac{\mu(n)}{n^s} = \frac{1}{\zeta(s)} + O\left(\frac{\delta(x)}{x^{s-1}}\right).$$

LEMMA 2.3 (cf. [9], Theorem 14-26(A), p. 316). If the Riemann hypothesis true, then for $x \geq 3$,

$$(2.4) \quad M(x) = \sum_{n \leq x} \mu(n) = O(x^{1/2}\omega(x)),$$

where

$$(2.5) \quad \omega(x) = \exp \{A \log x (\log \log x)^{-1}\},$$

A being a positive absolute constant.

LEMMA 2.4 (cf. [6], Lemma 2.5). If the Riemann hypothesis is true, then for $s > 1$,

$$(2.6) \quad \sum_{n \leq x} \frac{\mu(n)}{n^s} = \frac{1}{\zeta(s)} + O(x^{1/2-s}\omega(x)) .$$

LEMMA 2.5 (cf. [1], Lemma 2.1). *If $b \not\equiv 0 \pmod{a}$, then*

$$(2.7) \quad r_{a,b}(n) = \sum_{d^{2b}\delta=n} \mu(d)\tau_{a,b}(\delta) .$$

3. Main results. In this section, we improve the 0-estimates of the error terms. First we treat (1.5).

THEOREM 3.1. *For $x \geq 3$, $2a > b > a$, $b \not\equiv 0 \pmod{a}$, we have*

$$(3.1) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \alpha^*x^{1/a} + \beta^*x^{1/b} + O(x^{1/2b}\delta(x)) ,$$

where α^* and β^* are given by (1.3) and $\delta(x)$ is given by (2.2).

Proof. By Lemma 2.5, we have

$$(3.2) \quad \begin{aligned} R_{a,b}(x) &= \sum_{n \leq x} r_{a,b}(n) = \sum_{n \leq x} \sum_{d^{2b}\delta=n} \mu(d)\tau_{a,b}(\delta) \\ &= \sum_{d^{2b}\delta \leq x} \tau_{a,b}(\delta) . \end{aligned}$$

Let $z = x^{1/2b}$. Further, let $0 < \rho = \rho(x) < 1$, where the function ρ will be suitably chosen later. If $d^{2b}\delta \leq x$, then both $d > \rho z$ and $\delta > \rho^{-2b}$ cannot simultaneously hold. Hence

$$(3.3) \quad \begin{aligned} R_{a,b}(x) &= \sum_{\substack{d^{2b}\delta \leq x \\ d \leq \rho z}} \mu(d)\tau_{a,b}(\delta) + \sum_{\substack{d^{2b}\delta \leq x \\ \delta \leq \rho^{-2b}}} \mu(d)\tau_{a,b}(\delta) - \sum_{\substack{d \leq \rho z \\ \delta \leq \rho^{-2b}}} \mu(d)\tau_{a,b}(\delta) \\ &= R_1 + R_2 - R_3 , \end{aligned}$$

say.

Now, by (1.7),

$$(3.4) \quad \begin{aligned} R_1 &= \sum_{\substack{d^{2b}\delta \leq x \\ d \leq \rho z}} \mu(d)\tau_{a,b}(\delta) = \sum_{d \leq \rho z} \mu(d) \sum_{\delta \leq x/d^{2b}} \tau_{a,b}(\delta) \\ &= \sum_{d \leq \rho z} \mu(d) \left\{ \frac{\zeta(b/a)x^{1/a}}{d^{2b/a}} + \frac{\zeta(a/b)x^{1/b}}{d^2} + O\left(\frac{x^\theta}{d^{2b\theta}}\right) \right\} \\ &= \zeta(b/a)x^{1/a} \sum_{d \leq \rho z} \frac{\mu(d)}{d^{2b/a}} + \zeta(a/b)x^{1/b} \sum_{d \leq \rho z} \frac{\mu(d)}{d^2} \\ &\quad + O\left(x^\theta \sum_{d \leq \rho z} \frac{1}{d^{2b\theta}}\right) . \end{aligned}$$

Since $2a > b$ and $\theta \leq 2/(3a + 3b)$, we have $2b\theta < 1$. Hence

$$\begin{aligned} x^\theta \sum_{d \leq \rho z} \frac{1}{d^{2b\theta}} &= O(x^\theta(\rho z)^{1-2b\theta}) \\ &= O(\rho^{1-2b\theta}z) . \end{aligned}$$

Now, applying Lemma 2.2 for $s = 2b/a > 1$ and $s = 2$, we obtain from (3.4) that

$$\begin{aligned}
 R_1 &= \zeta(b/a)x^{1/a} \left\{ \frac{1}{\zeta(2b/a)} + 0(\rho z)^{1-2b/a} \delta(\rho z) \right\} \\
 &\quad + \zeta(a/b)x^{1/b} \left\{ \frac{1}{\zeta(2)} + 0((\rho z)^{-1} \delta(\rho z)) \right\} \\
 (3.5) \quad &\quad + 0(\rho^{1-2b/a} z) \\
 &= \frac{\zeta(b/a)}{\zeta(2b/a)} x^{1/a} + \frac{\zeta(a/b)}{\zeta(2)} x^{1/b} + 0(\rho^{1-2b/a} z \delta(\rho z)) \\
 &\quad + 0(\rho^{1-2b/a} z),
 \end{aligned}$$

since $b > a$ implies $\rho^{-1} < \rho^{1-2b/a}$.

We have by Lemma 2.1,

$$\begin{aligned}
 R_2 &= \sum_{\substack{d^{2b} \delta \leq x \\ \delta \leq \rho^{-2b}}} \mu(d) \tau_{a,b}(\delta) = \sum_{\delta \leq \rho^{-2b}} \tau_{a,b}(\delta) \sum_{d \leq (x/\delta)^{1/2b}} \mu(d) \\
 &= \sum_{\delta \leq \rho^{-2b}} \tau_{a,b}(\delta) M\left(\left(\frac{x}{\delta}\right)^{1/2b}\right) \\
 &= 0\left(x^{1/2b} \sum_{m \leq \rho^{-2b}} \tau_{a,b}(m) m^{-1/2b} \delta\left(\left(\frac{x}{m}\right)^{1/2b}\right)\right).
 \end{aligned}$$

Since $\delta(x)$ is monotonic decreasing and $(x/m)^{1/2b} \geq \rho z$, we have $\delta((x/m)^{1/2b}) \leq \delta(\rho z)$. Further, by (1.7) and partial summation, we get $\sum_{m \leq \rho^{-2b}} \tau_{a,b}(m) m^{-1/2b} = 0(\rho^{1-2b/a})$. Hence,

$$(3.6) \quad R_2 = 0(\rho^{1-2b/a} z \delta(\rho z)).$$

Also, we have by Lemma 2.1 and (1.7),

$$\begin{aligned}
 (3.7) \quad R_3 &= \sum_{d \leq \rho z} \mu(d) \sum_{\delta \leq \rho^{-2b}} \tau_{a,b}(\delta) = 0(\rho z \delta(\rho z) \rho^{-2b/a}) \\
 &= 0(\rho^{1-2b/a} z \delta(\rho z)).
 \end{aligned}$$

Hence by (3.3), (3.5), (1.3), (3.6) and (3.7), we obtain

$$(3.8) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \alpha^* x^{1/a} + \beta^* x^{1/b} + o(\rho^{1-2b/a} z \delta(\rho z)) + 0(\rho^{1-2b/a} z).$$

Now, we choose

$$(3.9) \quad \rho = \rho(x) = \{\delta(x^{1/4b})\}^{a/2b},$$

and write

$$\begin{aligned}
 (3.10) \quad f(x) &= \log^{3/5}(x^{1/4b}) \{\log \log(x^{1/4b})\}^{-1/5}, \\
 &= \left(\frac{1}{4b}\right)^{3/5} u^{3/5} (v - \log 4b)^{-1/5},
 \end{aligned}$$

where $u = \log x$ and $v = \log \log x$.

(3.11) For $v \geq 2 \log 4b$, that is, $u \geq 16b^2$, $x \geq e^{16b^2}$,

we have $v^{-1/5} \leq (v - \log 4b)^{-1/5} \leq (v/2)^{-1/5}$, so that

$$(3.12) \quad \left(\frac{1}{4b}\right)^{3/5} u^{3/5} v^{-1/5} \leq f(x) \leq \left(\frac{1}{4b}\right)^{3/5} u^{3/5} \left(\frac{v}{2}\right)^{-1/5},$$

We assume without loss of generality that the constant A in (2.2) is less than unity.

By (3.9), (2.2) and (3.10), we have

$$(3.13) \quad \rho = \exp \left\{ -\frac{Aa}{2b} f(x) \right\}.$$

By (3.11), we have $a/2b(1/4b)^{3/5}u^{3/5}(v/2)^{-1/5} \leq u/4b$. Hence by (3.12), (3.13) and the above,

$$\rho \geq \exp \left\{ -\frac{Aa}{2b} \left(\frac{1}{4b}\right)^{3/5} u^{3/5} \left(\frac{v}{2}\right)^{-1/5} \right\} \geq \exp \left\{ -\frac{u}{4b} \right\},$$

so that $\rho \geq x^{-1/4b}$. Hence

$$(3.14) \quad \rho z \geq x^{1/2b-1/4b} = x^{1/4b}.$$

Since $\delta(x)$ is monotonic decreasing $\delta(\rho z) \leq \delta(x^{1/4b}) = \rho^{2b/a}$, and so by (3.12) and (3.13), we have

$$(3.15) \quad \rho^{1-2b/a} \delta(\rho z) \leq \rho \leq \exp \left\{ -\frac{Aa}{2b} \left(\frac{1}{4b}\right)^{3/5} u^{3/5} v^{-1/5} \right\}.$$

Hence the first 0-term in (3.8) is equal to

$$\begin{aligned} & 0 \left(x^{1/2b} \exp \left\{ -\frac{Aa}{2b} \left(\frac{1}{4b}\right)^{3/5} u^{3/5} v^{-1/5} \right\} \right) \\ & = 0 \left(x^{1/2b} \exp \left\{ -\frac{Aa(1-2b\theta)}{2b} \left(\frac{1}{4b}\right)^{3/5} u^{3/5} v^{-1/5} \right\} \right), \end{aligned}$$

since $0 < 1 - 2b\theta < 1$. By (3.12) and (3.13), we see that the second 0-term in (3.8) is also of the above order. Thus, if $\Delta_{a,b}(x)$ denotes the sum of the two 0-terms in (3.8), we have

$$(3.16) \quad \Delta_{a,b}(x) = 0(x^{1/2b} \exp \{ -B \log^{3/5} x (\log \log x)^{-1/5} \}),$$

where $B = B_{a,b} = Aa(1 - 2b\theta)/2b$ is a positive constant.

Hence Theorem 3.1 follows by (3.8) and (3.16).

REMARK 3.1. Following the same procedure adopted in the proof of Theorem 3.1 in the case $b > 2a$ also, we obtain improvements in the error term of $R_{a,b}(x)$ in the sub cases where we have $\theta < 1/2b$

(for example, when $2b < 5a$, we have $\theta \leq 2/(5a + 2b) < 1/2b$) and in these cases, the asymptotic formula for $R_{a,b}(x)$ is given by

$$(3.17) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \alpha^* x^{1/a} + \beta^* x^{1/b} + O(x^{1/2b} \delta(x)),$$

where α^* and β^* are given by (1.3) and $\delta(x)$ is given by (2.2).

In fact, we get an improvement in the 0-estimate of (1.6) above in the first case from $O(x^{1/2b})$ to $O(x^{(1/2b)\delta(x)})$.

THEOREM 3.2. *If the Riemann hypothesis is true, then the error term $\Delta_{a,b}(x)$ in the asymptotic formula for $R_{a,b}(x)$ in (3.1) is $O(x^{(2-a\theta)/(4b+a-4ab\theta)})\omega(x)$, where θ is given by (1.7) and $\omega(x)$ is given by (2.5).*

Proof. Following the same procedure adopted in Theorem 3.1 and making use of (2.6) instead of (2.3), we obtain

$$(3.18) \quad \Delta_{a,b}(x) = O(\rho^{1/2-2b/a} z^{1/2} \omega(\rho z)) + O(\rho^{1-2b\theta} z).$$

Now choosing $\rho = z^{-a/(4b+a-4ab\theta)}$, we see that $0 < \rho < 1$ and $\rho^{1/2-2b/a} z^{1/2} = \rho^{1-2b\theta} z = x^{(2-a\theta)/(4b+a-4ab\theta)}$. Since $\omega(x)$ is monotonic increasing and $\rho z < z$, we have $\omega(\rho z) < \omega(z) = \omega(x^{1/2b}) < \omega(x)$.

Hence by (3.18) and the above discussion, we have $\Delta_{a,b}(x) = O(x^{(2-a\theta)/(4b+a-4ab\theta)})\omega(x)$, so that Theorem 3.2 follows.

REMARK 3.2. If the Riemann hypothesis is true, then the error term $\Delta_{a,b}(x)$ in the asymptotic formula for $R_{a,b}(x)$ in (3.17) is $O(x^{(2-a\theta)/(4b+a-4ab\theta)})\omega(x)$, where $\omega(x)$ is given by (2.5).

THEOREM 3.3. *For $x \geq 3$, $b < a < 2b$, $b \not\equiv 0 \pmod{a}$, we have*

$$(3.19) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \beta^* x^{1/b} + \alpha^* x^{1/a} + O(x^{1/2b} \delta(x)),$$

where α^* and β^* are given by (1.3) and $\delta(x)$ is given by (2.2).

Proof. Starting with Lemma 2.5 as in the proof of Theorem 3.1, we obtain

$$R_{a,b}(x) = \beta^* x^{1/b} + \alpha^* x^{1/a} + O(\rho^{-1} z \delta(\rho z)) + O(\rho^{1-2b\theta} z).$$

Now, choosing $\rho = \rho(x) = \{\delta(x^{1/4b})\}^{1/2}$ and $f(x)$ the same as in (3.10) and arguing on similar lines as in the proof of Theorem 3.1, we get Theorem 3.3.

REMARK 3.3. Following the same procedure adopted in the proof of Theorem 3.3, in case $a > 2b$ also, where $b \not\equiv 0 \pmod{a}$, we obtain the following:

$$(3.20) \quad R_{a,b}(x) = \beta^* x^{1/b} + O(x^{1/2b} \delta(x)).$$

COROLLARY 3.3.1 ($b = 1$) (cf. [1], Corollary 2.1). *If $a > 1$, then the set $R_a = R_{a,1}$ of the integers each of whose exponents is $\equiv 0$ or $1 \pmod{a}$ has asymptotic density $\zeta(a)/\zeta(2)$; more precisely*

$$(3.21) \quad R_a(x) = \frac{\zeta(a)}{\zeta(2)} x + O(x^{1/2} \delta(x)).$$

THEOREM 3.4. *If the Riemann hypothesis is true, then the error term $\Delta_{a,b}(x)$ in the asymptotic formula for $R_{a,b}(x)$ given by (3.19) is $O(x^{(2-b\theta)/b(5-4b\theta)} \omega(x))$, where θ is given by (1.7) and $\omega(x)$ is given by (2.5).*

Proof. By making use of (2.6) instead of (2.3) in the proof of Theorem 3.3, we obtain $\Delta_{a,b}(x) = O(\rho^{-3/2} z^{1/2} \omega(\rho z)) + O(\rho^{1-2b\theta} z)$.

Now, choosing $\rho = z^{-1/(5-4b\theta)}$ and arguing as in Theorem 3.2, we get Theorem 3.4.

REMARK 3.4. If the Riemann hypothesis is true, then the error term $\Delta_{a,b}(x)$ in the asymptotic formula for $R_{a,b}(x)$, given by (3.20) is $O(x^{(2a-b)/b(5a-4b)} \omega(x))$.

This result follows from Theorem 3.4 above, if we show that $a > 2b$ implies $\theta = 1/a$. Now, $a > 2b$ implies that $b < 2a$, so that by H.-E. Richert's result mentioned in §1, $\theta \leq 2/(3a + 3b) < 1/a$ and hence (1.7) reduces to $\sum_{m \leq x} \tau_{a,b}(m) = \zeta(a/b) x^{1/b} + O(x^{1/a})$, which implies that $\theta = 1/a$.

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Received February 2, 1977 and in revised form March 27, 1977.

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The *Pacific Journal of Mathematics* is issued monthly as of January 1966. Regular subscription rate: \$72.00 a year (6 Vols., 12 issues). Special rate: \$36.00 a year to individual members of supporting institutions.

Subscriptions, orders for back numbers, and changes of address should be sent to Pacific Journal of Mathematics, 103 Highland Boulevard, Berkeley, California, 94708.

PUBLISHED BY PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

Printed at Kokusai Bunken Insatsusha (International Academic Printing Co., Ltd.).
8-8, 3-chome, Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160, Japan.

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George E. Andrews, <i>Plane partitions. II. The equivalence of the Bender-Knuth and MacMahon conjectures</i>	283
Lee Wilson Badger, <i>An Ehrenfeucht game for the multivariable quantifiers of Malitz and some applications</i>	293
Wayne C. Bell, <i>A decomposition of additive set functions</i>	305
Bruce Blackadar, <i>Infinite tensor products of C^*-algebras</i>	313
Arne Brøndsted, <i>The inner aperture of a convex set</i>	335
N. Burgoyne, <i>Finite groups with Chevalley-type components</i>	341
Richard Dowell Byrd, Justin Thomas Lloyd and Roberto A. Mena, <i>On the retractability of some one-relator groups</i>	351
Paul Robert Chernoff, <i>Schrödinger and Dirac operators with singular potentials and hyperbolic equations</i>	361
John J. F. Fournier, <i>Sharpness in Young's inequality for convolution</i>	383
Stanley Phillip Franklin and Barbara V. Smith Thomas, <i>On the metrizable-ity of k_ω-spaces</i>	399
David Andrew Gay, Andrew McDaniel and William Yslas Vélez, <i>Partially normal radical extensions of the rationals</i>	403
Jean-Jacques Gervais, <i>Sufficiency of jets</i>	419
Kenneth R. Goodearl, <i>Completions of regular rings. II</i>	423
Sarah J. Gottlieb, <i>Algebraic automorphisms of algebraic groups with stable maximal tori</i>	461
Donald Gordon James, <i>Invariant submodules of unimodular Hermitian forms</i>	471
J. Kyle, <i>$W_\delta(T)$ is convex</i>	483
Ernest A. Michael and Mary Ellen Rudin, <i>A note on Eberlein compacts</i>	487
Ernest A. Michael and Mary Ellen Rudin, <i>Another note on Eberlein compacts</i>	497
Thomas Bourque Muenzenberger and Raymond Earl Smithson, <i>Fixed point theorems for acyclic and dendritic spaces</i>	501
Budh Singh Nashier and A. R. Rajwade, <i>Determination of a unique solution of the quadratic partition for primes $p \equiv 1 \pmod{7}$</i>	513
Frederick J. Scott, <i>New partial asymptotic stability results for nonlinear ordinary differential equations</i>	523
Frank Servedio, <i>Affine open orbits, reductive isotropy groups, and dominant gradient morphisms; a theorem of Mikio Sato</i>	537
D. Suryanarayana, <i>On the distribution of some generalized square-full integers</i>	547
Wolf von Wahl, <i>Instationary Navier-Stokes equations and parabolic systems</i>	557