

## HENRY LEWIS RIETZ—IN MEMORIAM

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Forty odd years ago few if any American college catalogs mentioned the words "mathematical statistics." The word "actuary" often called for the use of a dictionary. Some courses in the theory of probability, theory of errors, or method of least squares touched on some phases of statistics but aside from this there was little interest in the subject. In England at this time Karl Pearson was well started in his work at University College but "Student" was an undergraduate student. In Germany, Lexis was finishing his somewhat unrecognized labors at Goettingen. In Denmark, Thiele, and in Norway, Charlier were lecturing and writing on statistics from their own individual viewpoints.

During the four decades which have passed, the interest in theoretical statistics in the United States has increased to the point where it has a well established journal of its own and few university mathematical departments fail to list statistical courses. In this growth no one has had more influence than the subject of this memoir. His published papers, his personality, his students and his well directed energy have all been more than helpful in putting mathematical statistics where it is today.

Henry Lewis Rietz, son of Jacob and Tabitha Jane Rietz, was born August 24, 1875 at Gilmore, Ohio. He attended the local schools and in 1895 entered Ohio State University receiving his B.S. degree in 1899. After graduation he went to Cornell University as scholar, then fellow and assistant in mathematics. During his stay at Cornell he was closely associated with two other mathematical students, J. W. Young and H. W. Kuhn, later heads of the departments of mathematics at Dartmouth and Ohio State University respectively. In his last year Rietz was particularly interested in group theory and worked for his doctorate with Professor G. A. Miller who was then a member of Cornell's faculty. His dissertation was "On primitive groups of odd orders," published later in the *American Journal of Mathematics* and referred to in the *Encyclopedie des Sciences Mathematiques*. After receiving the Ph.D. in 1902 he spent one year as professor of mathematics and astronomy at Butler College in Indianapolis.

In 1903, Rietz accepted an instructorship at the University of Illinois where he stayed until 1918 becoming full professor in the meantime. In 1918 he was called to the University of Iowa as head of the department of mathematics, a position he held until his retirement in 1942.

During his first year at Illinois his interests were mainly in pure mathematics. His advanced courses were "Theory of Invariants" during the first semester and "Higher Plane Curves" during the second. During the next year a demand arose for some course in statistics. None of the members of the mathematics department were particularly prepared to give such a course but Rietz was induced to try it. The result was that he offered a course "Averages and