

Preface

It has been my good fortune to meet and get to know many remarkable people, mostly statisticians and mathematicians, and to derive much pleasure and benefit from these contacts. They were teachers, colleagues and students, and the following pages sketch their careers and our interactions. Also included are a few persons with whom I had little or no direct contact but whose ideas had a decisive influence on my work. To provide some coherence, the account is largely chronological and follows the steps of my own career.

Taken together, these sketches provide a very personal picture of the development of statistical theory from the 1930s to the 1970s. It is the period between two revolutions: that of Fisher, Neyman, and Pearson, which laid the foundations for the classical statistical theory of that period; and the second revolution, forty years later, brought about by the advent of the computer, which turned statistics in new directions.

The present account of this history is a highly selective one, which emphasizes the persons, institutions, and statistical topics that were close to my interests. One narrowing effect of this perspective stems from the fact that my career took place in the United States. As a consequence, the book focuses on American statisticians and institutions. Only the last two chapters discuss, briefly and very incompletely, developments in some other countries.

For writing these reminiscences, I did not have to rely entirely on my memory. There is much published material on many of the persons covered here, such as biographical sketches in Festschriften and collected works, and—unfortunately—obituaries and memorial articles. Of particular value were the “Conversations,” which are a regular feature of *Statistical Science*, and which provide firsthand accounts of the subjects being interviewed. An indispensable source for the Berkeley chapters was Constance Reid’s book, *Neyman—from Life*.

In addition, I sent copies of their sections to all living subjects, asking them for corrections and criticism, and I am most grateful for their helpful responses. At my request, most of them also sent me pictures of themselves, which form an important part of the book. Other pictures were provided

by Steve Stigler (of Raj Bahadur and Jimmie Savage), and David Brillinger (of John Tukey).

Nearly 20 pictures were put at my disposal by Ingram Olkin from the extensive collection he has assembled at Stanford; another dozen I owe to the courtesy of the archives of the Mathematisches Forschungsinstitut Oberwolfach, and still others to the archives of St. Andrews University. An important source for many pictures was the Berkeley Statistics Department, and four pictures came from Reid's book, *Neyman—from Life*. To all of these I extend my thanks. For preparing the pictures for publication, the help of Julie and Tanya Shaffer was invaluable.

I also want to thank Martina Schneider for helpful correspondence concerning the section on van der Waerden; to my editor, John Kimmel, for his encouragement and support; and to Agnes Herzberg for reviewing the book for Springer, and for many corrections and suggestions. To Len Shaffer, I am grateful for his typing of the manuscript from my hard-to-read handwritten version and for correcting many errors.

To conclude these acknowledgments, I want to express my deep gratitude to Persi Diaconis and Julie Shaffer, with both of whom I discussed the project as it went along, and who gave me advice and criticism when I needed it. They also read the manuscript after its completion, corrected many errors of fact, and greatly improved the exposition. To them I owe my greatest debt.



<http://www.springer.com/978-0-387-71596-4>

Reminiscences of a Statistician

The Company I Kept

Lehmann, E.L.

2008, XII, 316 p. 65 illus., Softcover

ISBN: 978-0-387-71596-4