



Herbert Anderson Toops (1895-1972),

(picture taken about 1927).

Herbert Anderson Toops,
1895 - 1995 Centennial

TOOPS, Herbert Anderson (Toops), prof. psychology; b. Kiousville, Ohio, September 18, 1895; son of John William and Leona Arvilla (Anderson) Toops; student Ohio Wesleyan University, 1912-14; A.B., Ohio State University, 1916, B.S. in education, 1916, A.M., 1917; Ph.D., Teachers College (Columbia University), 1921; married Laura Merrill Chassell, Dec., 31, 1922; children—Thorndike Clifford Chassell, Edward Marian Chassell, Nona, Laurence. Research asso. of the Inst. of Ednl. Research, Teachers Coll. (Columbia), 1921-23; asst. prof., psychology, Ohio State U., 1923-27, prof. psychology since 1927; asso. prof. psychology, U. of Minn., summer 1927. Consultant in statistics, Secretary of War. Mar-Sept. 1944; consultant of Nat. Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel, March-June 1945; consultant U.S. Navy, 1947-48, Nat. Research Council. Fellow A.A.A.S., Ohio Academy of Science, American Psychol. Assn.; member Assn. for Computing Machinery, American Statistical Association, American Math. Soc., Math. Assn. America, American Ednl. Research Assn., National Society for Study of Edn., Sociometric Soc., Midwestern Psychological Assn., Inst. of Mathematical Statistics, Ohio State Horticulture Soc., Nat. Soc. Coll. Teachers of Edn., Ohio Ednl. Research Assn., Psychometric Soc., Royal Statis. Soc., American Sociological Society, Econometric Soc., O. Wesleyan Union, Phi Delta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Alpha Psi Delta. Writer of ednl. subjects.

We celebrate the centennial of the birth of Herbert Anderson Toops, psychologist and statistician at Ohio State University for 42 years. Toops' mother, a school teacher for five years, taught him the first grade at home. Then he entered second grade in a one room brick school house taught by his father. He attended a regional high school and then Ohio Wesleyan for two years, 1912-1914.

At Ohio State he earned three degrees including a BA in psychology, a BS in education and a MA in psycholgy under Rudolph Pintner. During 1918 and

1919, he worked on the standardization of the trade tests used by the Army. This work was continued under Truman Kelley at Columbia in 1920.

Finally, by 1921 he completed his Ph.D. with Edward Lee Thorndike for psychology and Kelley for statistics.

He became an assistant professor of psychology at OSU in 1923 and professor in 1927. He also became responsible for the Ohio Psychological Exam given to all freshmen for guidance.

Toops' ambition to make the OPE the best ever was facilitated by the Ohio College Association. Toops was elected chairman of the "Committee on Technical Research," a post he held for 40 years.

Soon his graduate students were engaged in research on ways to make the test better. Other OCA members reported their experiences with the test or shared their ideas for additional tests or test modifications. A small thing, research and follow-up for each student, would be facilitated if all OCA members used a uniform data blank. This was needed so *complete* data would be available of each student taking the test at each school. Some registrars (there were few) refused to go along with this idea. They had worked out their own blanks and they wanted them just so.

In later years, achievement tests such as the SAT or ACT became popular. These tests are used as hurdles for the students to be accepted by the schools of their choice. For example, the SAT has a total of 60 questions on arithmetic, algebra and geometry. By contrast, the OPE has no questions on mathematics. A high school graduate not presenting credits in all of these courses would be hard pressed to do well on the SAT. But he could cram for a few weeks and raise his score.

With the eclipse of the popularity of the OPE, Toops turned to devising tests of other kinds and to his still unfinished work on *Motives*. Some graduate students liked his unfocused approach to teaching. Some undergraduates did not.

Toops told Harold Burt, the Department Chair: "Harold, I could teach those students to read their lesson and to do their problems. Rather, I teach them so one or two in the class may see how psychology and statistics are done." Finally, in August, 1972, Burt said: "I do not know what genius is, but Toops was a genius. While he was not the best undergraduate teacher, he was superb at research and working with graduate students. He required the graduate students to be really interested and willing to work. These were characteristics of Toops himself."

Toops had wide or diverse interests as evidenced by his citation. He never lost his love of nature, farming and horticulture. These are contrasted with his own declared fields of education, statistics and psychology.

In 1934 Toops was elected a member of the Royal Statistical Society. He was 39 years old. He died in Bemidji, Minnesota, on August 12, 1972.

References

- Edgerton, Harold A. Some Needs in Training Research. *Personnel Psychology*, 1955, 8, 19-25.
 Robert J. Wherry, Sr., (1904-1981) by C. J. Bartlett. *Personnel Psychology*, 1982, 35, 516-519.
 Dorothy C. Adkins (1912-1975) by Thelma G. Thurstone. *Psychometrika*, 1976, 41, 434-437.
 Kuder, Federic. A Reminiscence, *Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance*, 1980, 12, 199-205.
 Layton, Wilbur. *American Men and Women of Science — The Behavioral Sciences*.
 Perloff, Robert. *Who's Who*, 48th Edition, 1994, Vol. 2. 268.
 Toops, Herbert A. My aims and philosophy of life, *Unpublished*. 1963.
 Toops, Herbert A. List of publications, 1917-1965. *Unpublished*.
 Toops, Herbert A. 40th Report to the Ohio College Association, 1965. *Transactions of the ninety-fourth annual meeting of the Ohio College Association*, 1965.
 Toops, Herbert A. A Research Utopia in Industrial Psychology. *Personnel Psychology*, 1959, 12, 189-226.

SIOP CALENDAR

TIP Deadline for August Issue	May 15, 1995
SIOP Conference Orlando, FL	May 18-21, 1995
APS Convention New York, NY	June 29-July 2, 1995
APA Convention New York, NY	August 11-15, 1995
SIOP Conference San Diego, CA	April 25-28, 1996