



*Journ@l Electronique d'Histoire des
Probabilités et de la Statistique*

*Electronic Journ@l for History of
Probability and Statistics*

Vol 5, n°1; Juin/June 2009

www.jehps.net

CURRICULUM VITAE for Mr. Jean-André VILLE (1956)

Translation by Glenn Shafer

The French original of this curriculum vitae follows the translation. The French document has circulated among historians of probability since it was obtained from the archives of the University of Paris by Pierre Crépel in the 1980s. It is not dated, but it was evidently prepared in 1956. It includes a temporary appointment to the faculty of the University of Paris for 1956 but not the permanent appointment that was made on December 20, 1956, retroactive to November 1, the beginning of the fall semester.

Because the meaning of academic titles and degrees, in both French and English, varies over time and place, the translations must be treated with caution. In general, I have used terms now current in United States universities, and I have explained some of the differences in the notes. I am indebted to Olivier Azzola, Pierre Biscourp, Bernard Bru, Pierre Crépel, Alain Desrosières, Jacques Gorgeret, Jean-Yves Jaffray, Jean-Louis Leters, Alain Trognon, and Bernard Walliser for information in the notes. I have also drawn on Ville's personnel file as a government employee (Cote 19840325, art. 542, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau).

More information about Ville's early career is provided in the biography of Ville in this issue of the *Electronic Journal for History of Probability and Statistics*.

CURRICULUM VITAE
for Mr. Jean-André Ville

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Born 24 June 1910 at Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhône)

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| 1929 | Entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure. |
| 1931 | Degree in probability. Paris. |
| 1932 | Passed the agrégation ¹ in mathematical sciences. |
| 1932–33 | Military service as a second lieutenant in the reserve. |
| 1933–34 | Fellowship at the Institut Français in Berlin. |
| 1934–35 | Scholarship to the University of Vienna. |
| 1935–38 | Research Associate with the CNRS. |
| 1939 | Undergraduate degree in law. Paris. |
| 1939 | Doctor of sciences in mathematics. |
| 1938–41 | Teacher of preparatory special mathematics ² at the Lycée Clémenceau in Nantes. |
| 1941–43 | Acting assistant professor ³ at the University of Poitiers. Differential and integral calculus, advanced geometry, preparation for the agrégation in rational mechanics and special mathematics. |
| 1943–46 | Assistant Professor at the University of Lyon. General mathematics, then rational mechanics. Additional courses in <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analytic mechanics• Celestial mechanics• Financial mathematics Preparation for the agrégation in rational mechanics and special mathematics. ⁴ |

- 1948 Professor of matrix analysis and demographic mathematics at the Institute of Statistics at the University of Paris.⁵
- 1954 Instructor in geometry at the Ecole Polytechnique.⁶
- 1956 Acting Professor of automatic computing with electronic machines at the University of Paris.⁷

Scientific Societies

Econometric Society
 Société de Statistique de Paris
 Union internationale de Radio
 Société française de Recherche Opérationnelle

Consulting

Consultant at the CCIR (Comité international de la Radio) on questions concerning information theory (Comission chaired by Professor BALTH. Van der Pol).

Consultant at the CCIF (Comité international des Téléphones) on questions concerning information theory and circuit noise.

Juries

- 1944–45 Examiner on the entrance jury for the Ecole Normale Supérieure.
- 1949–55 Examiner on the qualification and admissions juries for the Ecole Polytechnique.⁸
- Since 1945 Member of the jury for selecting superintendents of insurance inspectors. (Ministry of Finance).

Prizes

- 1940 Bordin Prize for Mathematical Sciences
- 1945 Montyon Prize for Statistics

Private Business Activities

Currently Technical General Secretary of the Société Alsacienne de Constructions Mécaniques, charged with studying new fields of activity for the company.

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Notes

¹Passing this competitive examination qualifies a person to teach in a French lycée.

²Instead of entering the university after earning the baccalaureat, some French students continue their lycée studies for two more years in order to prepare for the competitions for admission to elite professional schools such as the Ecole Normale Supérieure or the Ecole Polytechnique. They study mathematics both years. In 1938–39, Ville taught the first of these two years, then called *mathématiques spéciales préparatoires*. He was then mobilized; he was at the front in 1939–40 and a prisoner of war in 1940–41. He continued to be official occupant of the post at the Lycée Clémenceau while he was in the military.

³Ville's appointment at Poitiers was at the rank of *maître de conférences*, the term then used for what is now called an assistant professor in American universities. The appointment was temporary; his duties were those normally performed by the professor holding the chair in differential and integral calculus, which was vacant. The decree by the Ministry of Education appointing him authorized him to assume the duties as soon as October 1, 1941, but the decree was approved at Vichy only on December 4, 1941, and he did not actually start at Poitiers until January 1, 1942. In the fall of 1941, he remained at the lycée at Nantes, where he taught special mathematics (*mathématiques spéciales*, the second and final year of mathematics preparing students for the competitions to enter the elite schools).

⁴The term *mathématiques spéciales* is not usually used for mathematics studied at the university. Its inclusion in the list of Ville's duties at Lyon may be an error.

⁵Between 1946 and 1956, Ville was on an indefinite leave of absence from his government job as a university professor. He did not receive a regular salary from the government during this period, but he took various teaching assignments often taken by university professors to supplement their income. In particular, he taught for ISUP, which offered courses in statistics under the auspices of the university but awarded certificates that were not university degrees.

⁶At the Ecole Polytechnique, students attend large lecture courses given by the school's senior professors. The title *maître de conférences*, translated here as "Instructor", is given to individuals hired to assist these senior professors. Because the school operates under the army's budget, these posts are very remunerative and sought after; they are usually occupied by university professors. Gaston Julia was professor of geometry at the Ecole Polytechnique from 1937 to 1965. He would lecture to all the students, about 300, and his *maîtres de conférences* would work with them in classes of 30. Documents in Ville's personnel file and at the Ecole Polytechnique establish that he served as *maître de conférences* for Julia in 1945–46, possibly in 1946–47, and then again from 1955 to 1963. I have not been able to confirm that he did so during 1954–55. So the date of 1954 may be a typographical error.

⁷Ville taught the theory of computing to undergraduates from 1956 until his retirement in 1978. This entry in the curriculum vitae suggests that he was brought onto the university's faculty to fill this role. But the permanent position created for him was in an area in which he had much stronger scholarly credentials: econometrics in a broad sense, or the mathematics of economics. On December 20, 1956, he was appointed retroactively to November 1, as "*maître de conférences d'économétrie*". He was promoted to professor effective January 1, 1958, and then to a newly created chair in econometrics effective October 1, 1959.

⁸Students compete for admission to the Ecole Polytechnique by first taking a written examination that lasts for the better part of a week. The examination papers are graded by a jury (*jury d'admissibilité*), which decides which applicants are qualified to sit for the oral examination. Because so many students compete and the stakes are so high, the jury works full-time for several months on the task, from May into July. The students chosen at this stage are then examined orally (for about four hours each) by the *jury d'admission*, which decides which students to admit.

CURRICULUM VITAE

de M. Jean-André VILLE

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Né le 24 juin 1910 à Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhône)

- 1929 Entré à l'Ecole Normale Supérieure.
- 1931 Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures (Calcul des Probabilités) Paris.
- 1932 Reçu à l'Agrégation des Sciences Mathématiques.
- 1932-33 Service militaire -Sous-Lieutenant de réserve.
- 1933-34 Pensionnaire à l'Institut Français de Berlin.
- 1934-35 Boursier à l'Université de Vienne.
- 1935-38 Chargé de Recherches au CNRS
- 1939 Licencié en Droit (Paris).
- 1939 Docteur ès-sciences Mathématiques.
- 1938-41 Professeur de Mathématiques Spéciales Préparatoires au Lycée Clémenceau à Nantes.
- 1941-43 Chargé de Cours à la Faculté des Sciences de Poitiers.
(Calcul différentiel et Intégral et Géométrie Supérieures, Préparation à l'Agrégation pour la Mécanique rationnelle et les Mathématiques spéciales).
- 1943-46 Maître de Conférences à la Faculté des Sciences de Lyon.
(Mathématiques Générales, puis Mécanique Rationnelle - Cours complémentaires de :
- Mécanique analytique
- Mécanique céleste
- Mathématiques Financières.
Préparation à l'Agrégation pour la Mécanique Rationnelle et les Mathématiques Spéciales.
- 1948 Professeur d'Analyse matricielle et de Démographie Mathématique à l'Institut de Statistique de l'Université de Paris.
- 1954 Maître de Conférences de Géométrie à l'Ecole Polytechnique.
- 1956 Chargé de Conférences sur le Calcul Automatique sur machines électroniques à la Faculté des Sciences de Paris.

Sociétés Scientifiques

Econometric Society
Société de Statistique de Paris
Union internationale de Radio
Société française de Recherche Opérationnelle.

Expertises

Expert près le CCIR (Comité international de la Radio) pour les questions touchant la théorie de l'Information (Commission présidée par le Professeur BALTH. Van der Pol).

Expert près le CCIF (Comité international des Téléphones) pour les questions

touchant la théorie de l'Information et les bruits de circuit.

Jurys.

- 1944 et 45 Examineur au jury d'entrée à l'Ecole Normale Supérieure.
1949-55 Examineur au jury d'admissibilité, puis d'admission à l'Ecole Polytechnique.
Depuis 1945 Membre du jury du Concours de Commissaire Contrôleur des Assurances (Ministère des Finances).

Prix.

- 1940 Prix Bordin des Sciences Mathématiques
1945 Prix Monthyon de Statistique.

Activités privées

Actuellement Secrétaire Général technique de la Société Alsacienne de Constructions Mécaniques avec la fonction d'étudier les branches nouvelles d'activités de la Société.

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