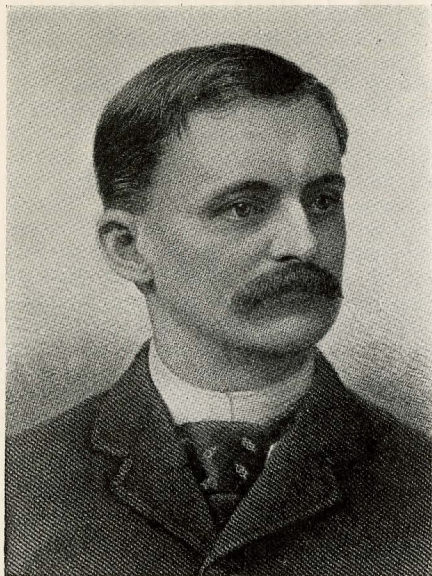


MAY 1934

E. E.



## Elihu Thomson

(A '84, M '91, F '13, member for life)

**President 1889-90**

**Honorary Member 1928**

**Edison Medalist 1909**

**John Fritz Medalist 1916**

March 29, 1853, being brought to the United States in 1858, settling in Philadelphia. Upon graduating from Central High School, Philadelphia, in 1870, he was at once appointed assistant professor of chemistry of that institution. He was full professor from 1876 to 1880, when he resigned to devote his entire time to electrical research.

His unusual inventive genius and his marked ability to learn quickly, were apparent even during his early years. Professor Thomson's first important invention was the 3-coil arc dynamo which, with its automatic regulator and other novel features, was the basis of the successful electric lighting system produced by the Thomson-Houston Electric Company, beginning in 1880. This company was established in Philadelphia in 1879 by Professor Thomson and E. J. Houston, his former colleague at the high school who later, 1893-95, also was a president of the Institute. The company moved to New Britain, Conn., in 1880 and then to Massachusetts in 1883, merging in 1892 with the Edison General Electric Company to become the General Electric Company. In the early years of the new company Professor Thomson was elected chief engineer, many of fundamental inventions upon which the present industry is based being his. Professor Thomson is today consulting engineer of the General Electric Company and

ELIHU THOMSON, fifth president of the Institute and one of the 6 living charter members, has a record in electrical engineering that can hardly be paralleled by any other individual living at present. Throughout almost the entire period of the development of electrical theory and apparatus, Professor Thomson has been deeply interested in all phases of electrical engineering. He has freely passed on to others the tremendous store of information that he has collected. As one small note of appreciation of his generous efforts, his friends continue to call him by the title of professor, even though more dignified titles may be applied.

He was born in Manchester, England,

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director of its Thomson Research Laboratory at Lynn. During his career some 700 patents have been taken out by Professor Thomson, these covering almost every field of electrical activity.

Professor Thomson was the recipient of the Institute's first Edison Medal, and has received some 15 medals in this and other countries, as well as other honors. These include 3 notable medals of Great Britain; in 1916 he was the recipient of the Hughes Medal bestowed by the Royal Society; in 1924 he was honored by the award of the Kelvin Medal, given by all the technical and engineering bodies of England with the concurrence of the leading engineering societies of America; and in 1927 he was presented by the Institution of Electrical Engineers, of England, with the Faraday Medal.

In 1889 he was decorated by the French Government for his electrical inventions, being made a chevalier and officer of the Legion of Honor.

He was awarded the Rumford Medal, in 1901; the Grand Prix at the Paris Expositions of 1899 and 1900; the John Fritz Medal of 1916; and the Elliott Cresson Gold Medal from the Franklin Institute. He has twice received the John Scott Medal for electrical inventions. Honorary degrees have been conferred upon him by several institutions.

In addition to serving the Institute as vice-president 1887-89, and then as president, he has been active on the committee of cooperative research 1898-1900, the committee on standardization 1898-1900, and the Edison Medal committee, of which he was chairman 1911-15. He served as the Institute's representative on the U. S. National Committee of the International Electrotechnical Commission for many years preceding 1930.