



THE NATURE of INFINITESIMALS

By Peter F. Erickson

Xlibris Corporation. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 260 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.2in. x 1.1in. This cerebral text seeks understanding of the mysteries at the heart of mathematics. At a certain level, math is a mystery. For example, what exactly is a line Is it a series of tiny dots in a row Is it the length from one dot to another These are the types of questions that author Peter F. Erickson seeks to answer in The Nature of Infinitesimals. But though The Nature of Infinitesimals focuses on number theory, its discussion of the philosophical beliefs of mathematicians in history is just as revealing. As the book details number theorists of old, it becomes clear that math is at least as prone to interpretation as art or music. Richard Dedekind, for example, believed that math could not be based on human perception but strictly on imaginary numbers. The book cites Ayn Rand as believing that infinity is potential only. As a result, the cold numbers of mathematics seem much more mutable and subjective than most college textbooks would imply. The book can be construed as the author's conversation with several generations of theorists. From Aristotle to Leibniz, each one seems to have different...



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