



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Recommended Readings



The following is information The Actuary received from Ardian Gill, FSA, MAAA, who donated a collection of books to the SOA library. His write-up about the collection follows.

The profession should be made aware of a rare, indeed unique, addition to the SOA library: the library of the first American actuary, one Charles Gill, who was actuary of the Mutual Benefit Life and later of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York.

The books date from the first half of the 19th century and, quite unsurprisingly, are not in pristine condition. But what a library it was, and what a mind was possessed by Gill. Most of the works are in French because the French dominated mathematics for most of that century. The authors' names alone will transport any actuary back to his or her college math courses:

Lagrange, *Mécanique Analytique*, vols. 1 and 2
 Poisson, *Traité de Mécanique*
 Lacroix, *Traité Élémentaire de Calcul des Probabilités*
 Ampère, *Philosophie des Sciences*
 Cauchy, *Exercices de Mathématiques*
 Laplace, *Traité de Mécanique Céleste*

The Swiss get into the act with Euler's *L'Analyse Infiniment*, whose work inspired Cauchy.

The list goes on, even to a slim volume titled *Gill's Analysis*.

Included in my donation are a few volumes not from Gill's library, among them *Testimony of the Investigation of Equitable Life* (1905; the infamous Armstrong Investigation that changed the nature of insurance regulation) and *Letters and Sayings of Amicus*, a folksy collection of gossip and goings-on at the Mutual Life.

An article titled "Do Books Make the Man?" describes the library and the prominent actuaries of the era. It can be found online at <http://www.contingencies.org/mayjun04/tradecraft.pdf>.

For more information, contact Dean Ruppert, SOA digital librarian, at druppert@soa.org.

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