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Book reviews

The life of Charles Francis McCay

by Sheila Kelley

Episodes in the Life of Charles Francis McCay — Academic, Actuary, Author and Businessman by William Porter Kellam. Privately published, Athens, Georgia, 1983. 133 pages.

If you asked a group of actuaries to name some actuaries who practiced during the third quarter of the 19th century, those who didn't quickly change the subject might come up with Elizur Wright, Charles Gill and Sheppard Homans. Canadians might think of Hugh C. Baker. Few would name Charles F. McCay; even fewer would pronounce his name — as if spelled McCoy — as he did.

Charles F. McCay was well known during his lifetime. He was born March 8, 1810, in Pennsylvania and died March 13, 1889, in Baltimore. During his early career, McCay taught mathematics, philosophy and astronomy. From 1833 to 1853, he was at the University of Georgia in Athens, teaching astronomy and mathematics and writing a calculus textbook. While in Athens, he also acted as agent for the Mutual Life

Insurance Company of New York and served as actuary of the Southern Mutual Life Insurance Company. McCay later moved on to become president of the University of South Carolina, and was involved in the insurance and banking businesses. During his career, he devised various mortality tables, including possibly the first select and ultimate table of life insurance mortality on this continent.

McCay almost was as well known to British as to American actuaries. This was because the Actuarial Society did not exist during McCay's lifetime; he died just weeks before the Society was organized. During McCay's lifetime, American actuarial authors submitted their papers for publication in the *Journal of the Institute of Actuaries*.

The author, William Porter Kellam, was director of libraries at the University of Georgia until his retirement in 1973. His interest in Charles F. McCay sprang from McCay's connection to the university, not from his experience as an actuary. I learned of this book while looking for information on McCay for the book *Our Yesterdays* by E.J. Moorhead. McCay, a strong supporter of Elizur Wright's views on life insurance supervision, published many articles in American trade papers from 1870-1880. Kellam, during his research for his book, collected copies of McCay's articles; they, as well as the book, which is out of print, are available for loan from the SOA library.

Kellam's excellent book should be of interest to actuaries, especially those in the South. Because the material about McCay's actuarial career appears in a separate section entitled, Part III, Businessman: The Augusta Years: 1857-1869, reading of the other sections is optional.

Sheila Kelley is the daughter of E.J. Moorhead, author of the book *Our Yesterdays: The History of the Actuarial Profession in North America 1809-1979*.

Actuarial evidence

by William B. Frye

Actuarial Evidence: Valuing Past and Future Income by Donald R. Anderson. Published by Carswell (416-291-8421), Agincourt, Canada, 1986, second edition, 103 pages.

Donald Anderson has prepared a new, expanded version of his book *Actuarial Evidence*. The organization of the second edition is the same as the first. It begins with an introduction to the actuarial profession, proceeds to a discussion of basic actuarial principles and procedures, and continues with a consideration of the many contingencies that could affect the value of a stream of income. Among the contingencies considered at length are mortality, disability, employment, divorce and remarriage. The book closes with chapters on actuarial reports and testimony, and possible future evolution of actuarial evidence.

Although there is much discussion of selecting actuarial assumptions and sources of data, this is not a handbook for the practicing actuary. It provides an excellent review of the factors to consider in calculations for legal cases, and gives a view of how the actuary's role might be perceived by other parties involved. Its greatest value might be for attorneys and others in the legal system for understanding what the actuary can and cannot do.

This book is one of the references for Course P-564.

William B. Frye is Assistant Professor in the Mathematics Department, Ball State University.

We want to hear from you

Have you traveled internationally, for business or pleasure? If so, you probably have learned some valuable tips for conducting business abroad and generally "getting around." Now you can share your experience with those attending the 1990 Annual Meeting in Orlando. This year's theme is "International Opportunities," and the SOA Communications staff plans to gather stories and advice about international customs and travel from Society members and have a summary of these available at the meeting. Please submit your material by August 15 to the Communications Department at the Society of Actuaries.