

# The Accounting Historians Notebook

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Volume 16  
Number 2 *Fall 1993*

Article 16

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1993

## According to Hoyle

United States Playing Card Company

Alfred Robert Roberts

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### Recommended Citation

Playing Card Company, United States and Roberts, Alfred Robert (1993) "According to Hoyle," *The Accounting Historians Notebook*: Vol. 16 : No. 2 , Article 16.

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*The following note was taken from the preface to "Key to Bookkeeping," by Ira Mayhew Eclectic Educational Series, published by Van Antwerp, Bragg & Co., 1884.*

## ECLECTIC EDUCATION - 1884

The schools of a country should teach what its children and youth will need to know and practice on leaving them. Less than fifty years ago the principal branches taught in our public schools were reading, writing, and arithmetic. But times have changed. The courses of study in the improved schools of the present time have been much extended, but not always wisely. Branches that were formerly of minor importance have now become essential. Among them is Bookkeeping, which, thirty-five years ago, was not authorized as a public school study, even in the city of New York. With railroads now traversing our widely extended country in all directions, and with the telegraph, the telephone, and cheap postage, the buying, selling, and exchange of products have been greatly multiplied, thus making neighbors of persons hundreds and thousands of miles apart. As a consequence,

in every portion of the country the comforts and luxuries of other parts of it are common. This easy interchange renders the knowledge and practice of Bookkeeping a necessity of the times.

Besides, Bookkeeping gives a mental discipline equal to that gained from the study of any other branch, and superior to that realized from the study of most branches. Double-entry Bookkeeping, while a science, deserves to rank among the fine arts. It challenges the admiration of lovers of the beautiful and the true. It cultivates the judicial powers of the mind. It quickens and strengthens the love of justice and equity. It promotes fair dealing among men. It contributes to private and public virtue. It leads to economy and thrift in private and public affairs. Its general study and practice will reduce pauperism and crime, and promote frugality and virtue.



*As one might expect, "there is a lot of history in annual reports." Al Roberts, co-director of the Accounting History Research Center at Georgia State University, provides the following commentary as an example. It is taken from the 1957 Annual Report of The United States Playing Card Company of Cincinnati, Ohio.*

## ACCORDING TO HOYLE

Some four decades before the American Revolution, there existed in London a number of coffee houses in which the gentry and merchant classes gathered to sip chocolate and coffee, to talk, and to play Whist, the increasingly popular card game destined to be the forerunner of Auction and Contract Bridge and other trump

games of the partnership family. One of the habitués of the Crown Coffee House on Bedford Row was Edmond Hoyle, a middle-aged lawyer.

Hoyle became so proficient at Whist that he decided to teach it and forego the practice of law. History repeated itself two hundred years later when Charles Goren

turned from law to become America's great Bridge player and author. Hoyle demonstrated the fine points of the game to the lords and ladies of the time for "very stiff prices." In 1742, he published his first book with the imposing title "A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist, Containing the Laws of the Game, and also Some Rules Whereby a Beginner May, with Due Attention to Them, Attain to the Playing It Well."

A few years later, he came out with the initial edition of Hoyle's Games, giving rules and advice on five games of skill—Whist, Chess, Backgammon, Quadrille, and Piquet. Thus he pioneered in the authorship of a clear and scientific presentation of the rules, ethics, and strategy of games as we understand them today. His technique was amazingly modern, since he based it on the Laws of Probability, and his principles still are as sound as ever. In fact, his Code of Ethics and Fair Play from the Treatise on Whist is included, almost verbatim, in the Laws of Auction and Contract Bridge.

Hoyle's books were best sellers in the eighteenth century and his fame was recorded by noted contemporary authors and artists. He was lampooned in a play called "The Humours of Whist, As Acted Every Day at White's and Other Coffee Houses and Assemblies." His teachings were mentioned in *The Rambler*, *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, *The Connoisseur*, and in Henry Fielding's novel "Tom Jones." Hogarth, the famous British painter, pictured Hoyle on Whist in one of his canvases, and the illustrious poet, Lord Byron, paid him perhaps the greatest tribute of all when he wrote in "Don Juan" that "Troy owes to Homer what Whist owes to Hoyle."

Largely as a result of Hoyle's efforts, Whist thrived not only in the fashionable salons and clubs of London but in the little villages and towns scattered throughout the English countryside. Whist societies

sprang up everywhere to band together devotees of the game, and a "rubber of Whist" soon became a popular form of home entertainment.

His association with card-game rules created such a reputation for Edmond Hoyle that he is now quoted as an authority on Poker, Pinochle, Rummy and Canasta—all unknown in his day. Each new book of rules published on card and board games is invariably called a "Hoyle." The United States Playing Card Company, for example, at intervals over the sixty-three years of its corporate existence, has published fifty editions expanding and modernizing the original Hoyle's Games. The last thirty-nine of these have included Hoyle's name in the title.

Because of the large volume distributed annually by the Company, this series of publications, now termed "The Official Rules of Card Games—Hoyle Up To Date," still ranks as high in the list of best sellers as did the original many years ago. Little wonder then that when Edmond Hoyle died in 1769 "full of years and honours," his accomplishments had made his name a household word. To this day it is synonymous with correct procedure in anything whatsoever.



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