

CITY ANIMALS

A History of Our Changing Relationship With Other Hoboken Residents



Neighbors



Food and Clothing

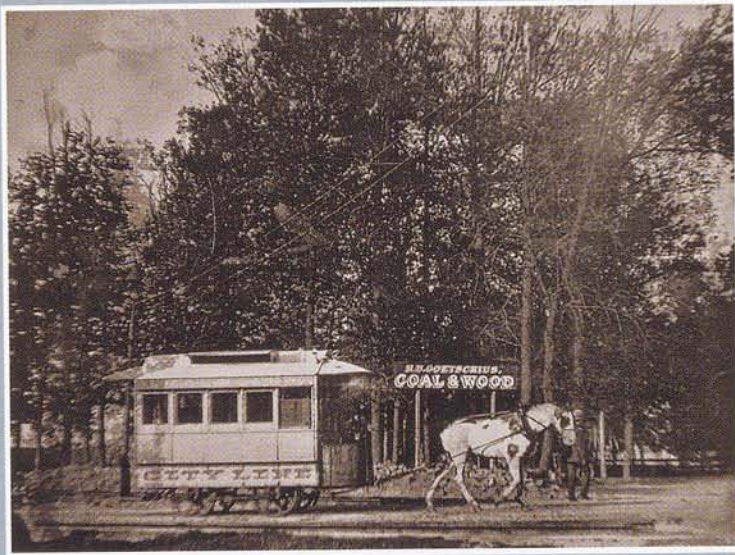


Workers

A Hoboken Historical Museum Publication

Holly Metz





Willow Avenue Horse Car, Twelfth Street and Elysian Fields, circa 1892. Hoboken Public Library Historical Collection.



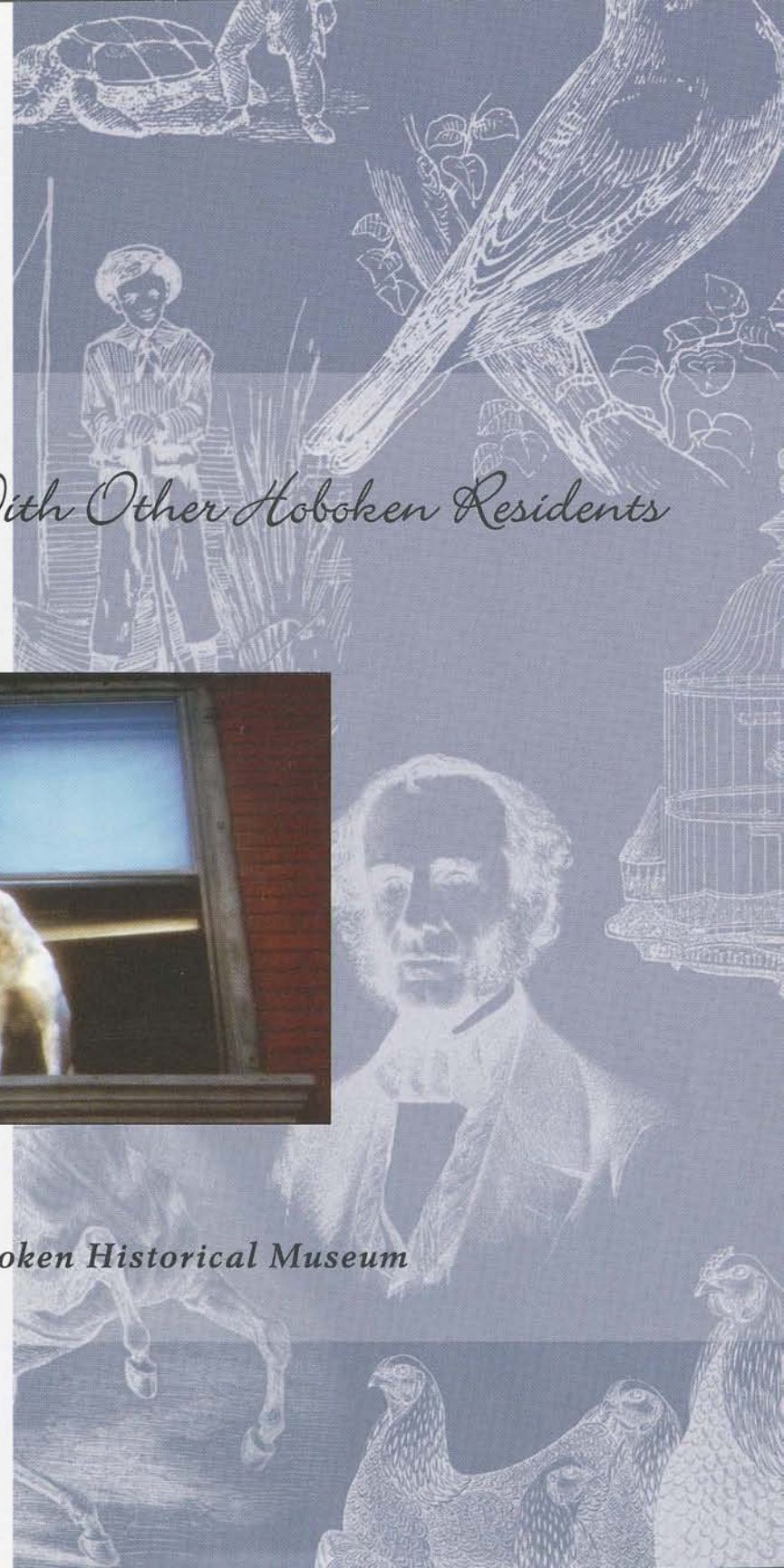
Hoboken Fire Department Truck No. 2, circa 1910. Junction of Newark Street and Ferry Street (now Observer Highway). Hoboken Public Library Historical Collection.

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An Exhibition at the Hoboken Historical Museum



Acknowledgements

City Animals

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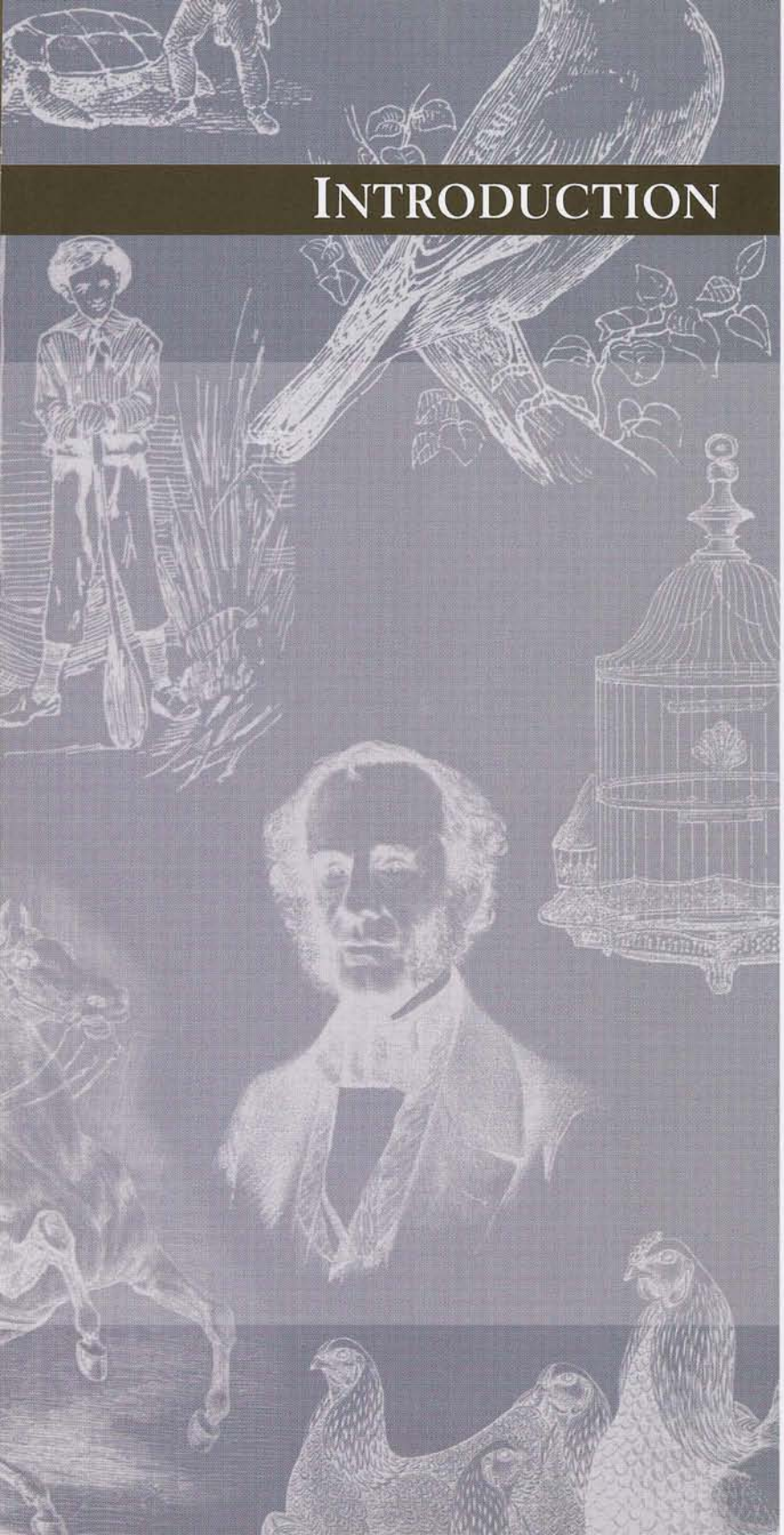
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INTRODUCTION

[When man] is *being seen* by the animal, he is being seen as his surroundings are seen by him. His recognition of this is what makes the look of the animal familiar. And yet the animal is distinct, and can never be confused with man.¹

—John Berger, from his essay “Why Look At Animals?”

The idea for this exhibit began with Rex, a bull terrier, and a 1922 photograph of his wake in a Hoboken parlor.

A photocopy of the image—taken in the front room of Rex’s “master,” a dentist at 63 Newark Street—had been dropped off at the Hoboken Historical Museum several years before, along with a dozen unrelated images originating from the Bettmann/CORBIS archives.² I do not remember the other photos, but the tiny, grainy image of a dog laid out in a casket lined with white silk, surrounded by bouquets and wreaths of flowers, and accompanied by a white poodle the unidentified photographer described as a “friend” and “mourner,” provoked too many questions to be filed away. Was the image authentic? (It hadn’t helped that the dentist’s name was listed as “Dr. Hyde,” but a 1915 city directory easily confirmed that Arthur M. Hyde, dentist, had indeed lived and worked at 63 Newark.) Why did the doctor provide such an elaborate funeral for Rex? What was their relationship? The date of the photo was especially intriguing to me, as it challenged my belief that funerals for dogs and cats, along with burials in pet cemeteries, are a more recent historical development.³

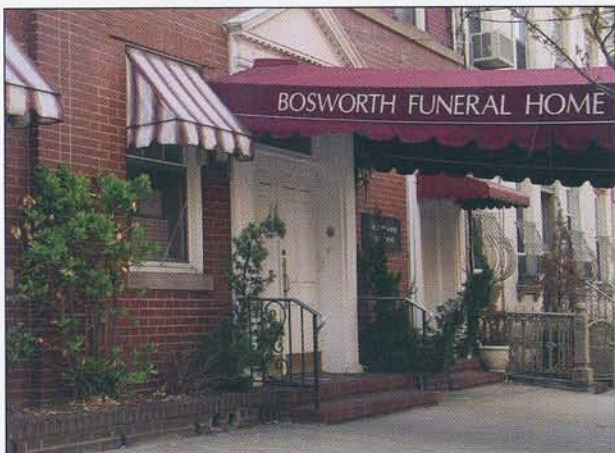
The photographer had penned some notes. Rex, he explained, was 16 years old, “had a host of friends and was a great pal of the doctor’s. Consequently, when the dog died, arrangements were made for a fitting burial.” It seemed that this photograph, if it *was* genuine, might depict an early, public expression of what veterinary associations now call “the human/animal bond.”⁴

Not exactly. A front-page article in the February 8, 1922, *Hudson Dispatch*, in addition to presenting an eyewitness account, offered another perspective on Rex’s wake. Featuring photographs of Dr. Hyde and Rex (in his prime), the article included multiple references to the expense of the embalming, casket, printed epitaph, and hearse—\$350 including flowers—and then offered Dr. Hyde’s explanation for the pricey display:

“I ought to be willing to spend at least that sum, when you consider that Rex in his sixteen years of life won twenty-two battles with other dogs. Altogether I won \$800 in bets that I placed on my dog in dog fights.”



Dog lying in a casket, Hoboken, New Jersey, February 7, 1922. © Bettmann/CORBIS.



Bosworth Funeral Home on Willow Avenue in Hoboken, 2004. Courtesy of McKevin Shaughnessy.

Dr. Hyde had—to the press, at least—justified the funeral based on Rex’s usefulness and commercial value, a conception of animals well established in earlier centuries. And Rex had also served as a form of entertainment (another enduring idea) for his master and others. Had he continued to do so, even in death? For after Rex’s body was embalmed at Bosworth’s undertaking parlors (a Hoboken mortuary that continues to this day) and was placed in a “costly casket,” the dog “lay in state before the front windows of the doctor’s office.” For a full day and night, the newspaper report announced, the casket could be “plainly seen from the street, which is in a busy part of the city, and literally crowds of persons congregated on the sidewalk below gawking up at the window. Many of them, although total strangers to the doctor, went upstairs to satisfy their curiosity.”

It seemed like a sideshow—or, at least, that’s the impression one gets from the *Dispatch* reporter, who, at the close of the article noted that Dr. Hyde had composed a few “one-step songs,” including one called “Prohibition You’re a Failure,” and that the doctor had teeth he’d pulled from patients’ mouths mounted into the handle of a gold cane.

And yet, waking a deceased loved one at home was still the common practice in Hoboken in 1922, notes Bosworth’s current owner, James Bosworth. Why *not* a beloved dog? So I asked: Had other dogs been waked in the city? James Bosworth could find no record of any dog funerals organized by the mortuary, not even Rex’s.

I investigated Rex’s burial. The *Dispatch* had claimed his body was to be “conveyed in an ordinary hearse to Woodlawn Cemetery, New York, where a section of the cemetery is reserved for dead dogs,” but such a section, I learned, had never existed at Woodlawn. Pet owners sometimes included their animals in family mausoleums, a Woodlawn historian told me.⁵ There was no Arthur Hyde interred there.

That’s when I began to research the origins of pet cemeteries in the New York/New Jersey area, thinking one might have been started by the 1920s, and learned the nation’s first pet cemetery, Hartsdale Canine Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York, was actually established in 1896. After discovering that local health laws prevented one of his clients from legally burying her dog in New York City, veterinarian Samuel Johnson had set aside land in his Westchester County apple orchard for the burial of dogs (and soon after, other domesticated animals as well). In that cemetery’s excellent records, I found Rex’s final resting place: Dr. A.M. Hyde of 63 Newark Street in Hoboken had interred his dog on February 8, 1922, in Plot Number 2064 in Hartsdale Canine Cemetery.⁶

But the story of Rex the fighting dog continued to prompt questions: Where were dog fights held in the county? Were they commonplace? Were other animals used? Were there any animal protection laws addressing fights, and who was meant to enforce them? When did Hobokenites begin to reject animal fighting as a “sport”?

Soon I was thinking about how humans view animals, how our relationship to one species or another has changed over time, and I realized (as one who has explored several features of my own

town's history over the past fifteen years) that if I could trace a century or two of Hoboken residents' interactions with domesticated, companion, wild and "exotic" animals, I might be able to provide an unusual local history—touching on changing modes of city transportation, land use, architecture, food production, recreation, employment, the health of humans and animals and education on humane treatment. Over the many years Hoboken has developed from a sparsely inhabited wetland to a densely populated industrial (and then post-industrial) city, animals have been variously viewed as **neighbors, workers, food, clothing, pests and strays, spectacle, companions and family**—and, often, more than one of these simultaneously. For *City Animals*, I used these categories of human perception to organize the photographs, maps, videos, documents, paintings, sculpture and artifacts I found in private collections and in the collections of the Hoboken Historical Museum, Hoboken Public Library History Collection, Hoboken Fire Department Museum, New Jersey Historical Society, New-York Historical Society and the Library of Congress—all of which provided insight into the way animals and people have lived in the city of Hoboken.

Several artifacts allowed for more than one interpretation, presenting the frequently conflicted, always complicated interactions of humans and animals. What is one to make, for example, of the *Chained Dog Under Car*, Robin Schwartz's 1984 photograph of a dog in a Madison Street lot? The dog is clearly perceived as a "worker," valuable and necessary enough to be chained (so as to remain on the job and, perhaps, to keep him from being stolen); and yet, the excessiveness of his shackling (a well-trained dog would serve as a guard without the need for chains) suggests that a vivid display of the dog's immobility is required by his keeper.

Predictably, much of the history that appears in *City Animals* relates how humans have laid waste the lives of other beings, but it also includes animals "that have profited from the rise of civilized humanity." Pigeons and starlings, for example, remain wild but are, as zoologist John C. McLoughlin explains in his illuminating book on city-dwelling inquilines, "bound to us in their dependence," having adapted to living within *our* nests.⁷ As urbanites, we are now linked to them, whether we like it or not.

Many city animals are *not* represented in this exhibit, as the potential scope of the project meant that limits had to be set. The animal kingdom, notes urban wildlife author Sarah B. Landry, ranges "from sponges to man."⁸



Robin Schwartz, *Chained Dog Under Car*, 1984. Courtesy of the photographer.

Had I unlimited time to research, I might have tracked down stories of Hoboken's ferrymen and ocean liner crews, and included in this history the many gulls still seen on our shores; or if I'd located studies documenting the destructive power of shipworms, they, too might have been in this text, given Hoboken's history of hosting shipyards. Bedbugs, silverfish, cockroaches and mosquitoes (the latter considered by many to be New Jersey's true State Bird) have made Hoboken's residents uncomfortable for generations, but I was more interested in the *changing* relationships between humans and animals: the "English" Sparrow, which went from pet in the 1850s to pest in the 1890s to threatened neighbor today; or the horse, which went from fundamental animal worker before the advent of "the horseless carriage," to meat (beginning in the Second World War, when many staples were going to troops engaged abroad, and continuing thereafter during hard economic times, horse meat was sometimes served in Hoboken restaurants in lieu of beef, leading the mayor and city council to pass an ordinance in 1959 requiring restaurants to identify such meals with the label: "This is horse flesh").⁹ I have assembled *a* history of city animals, one that is

necessarily (and even willfully) idiosyncratic. (Despite the statements made above, for example, rats, which we have *always* treated as vermin, *are* in *City Animals*. I simply could not resist the stories told about them, which seemed to reveal so much about our city and its human inhabitants.)

Similarly, a limit had to be set on the starting point for my research. Although I initially settled on 1855, the date Hoboken incorporated *as a city* (despite its semi-rural landscape), I moved the date back when I unexpectedly found in the New Jersey Historical Society archives a circa 1822 petition by John Cox Stevens and Robert Livingston Stevens, two members of Hoboken's "founding family," calling upon New Jersey State legislators to permit "a course for trails of speed *on the island of Hoboken*." That reference to Hoboken's original landscape—a marshy island adjacent to the western shore of the North (or Hudson) River—allowed me not only to investigate the Stevenses' failed attempt to bring horseracing here but to explore the



"View of Hudson River, From Elysian Fields, Hoboken, New Jersey," *Gleason's Pictorial*, 1853. From the collections of the New Jersey Historical Society.

wildlife found in Hoboken's pre-filled wetlands and undisturbed cliffs by area naturalists such as John J. Audubon and William Cooper, a founder of the American Museum of Natural History who later moved to Hoboken.

Location, entrepreneurs are often told, is everything; and Hoboken's nearness to Manhattan comes up again and again as one researches the smaller city's development. And so do certain names—most notably, members of the Stevens family. Colonel John Stevens (father of the aforementioned horseracing petitioners) bought at auction in 1784 most of the area today known as Hoboken. In 1814, after he inaugurated steam ferry service to Manhattan, he moved his large family from New York to the Georgian-style mansion he had built in Hoboken atop a promontory of serpentine rock (now known as Castle Point). Around 1820, he began to develop the waterfront as a resort, with the people of New York City his market, and his private ferry service their means of transport. In addition to the River Walk he constructed around the cliffs to the northern reaches of Hoboken, Stevens created the landscaped Elysian Fields for weekend visitors. New Yorkers, he advertised, could stroll along the river, taking in unobstructed views of Manhattan island and enjoy healthy rural air. Visitors could also take in various amusements, including several that featured "exotic" animals, and which are detailed in *City Animals*.

In 1838, Colonel Stevens created the Hoboken Land & Improvement Company to oversee the city's development, organize its street grid, build multi-family dwellings and encourage new industries to establish in Hoboken. Through "the Company" and its real estate holdings, members of the Stevens family continued for the next 100 years to have significant "economic control of the city they had created," so readers of this text will find references to several generations of Stevenses.¹⁰

The city's rapid growth from 1860 to 1910, and its role as a port for transatlantic shipping lines, brought waves of European immigrants to Hoboken—Germans, Irish, Italians, Jews from Eastern Europe—and, of course, more domesticated animals to work for and feed the city's burgeoning population. Animals and humans lived in close quarters: draught animals were stabled near homes and businesses and traversed the streets; period newspapers report pigs, goats, chickens and dogs in yards and at large. *City Animals* touches upon the way people lived *with* these animals, and includes related developments in (or the lack of) sanitation, medicine and animal

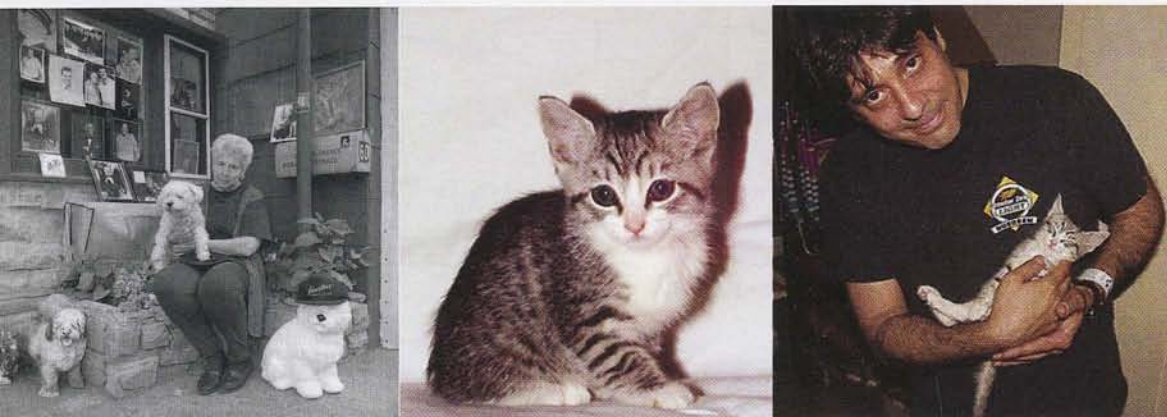


City of Hoboken, 1881, showing early industrialization. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. According to Stevens historian Geoffrey W. Clark, “manufacturing industries in Hoboken increased from 121 in 1879 to 289 in 1889 and then to a peak of 399 in 1899.”¹¹

control. A 1912 *Sanitary Survey* produced by the Robert L. Stevens Fund for Municipal Research in Hoboken, for example, makes clear that many city residents—human *and* nonhuman—lived and worked in harsh and filthy conditions during the early 20th century: The report includes accounts of manure heaped outside of stables along Court Street; tenements on Adams Street with backyard chicken houses but no heating system, no bathing facilities and no electricity; goats rummaging through street garbage and wraithlike girls emerging at dusk to dig through the city’s lowland dumping grounds to retrieve cinders for fuel.¹² In the process of researching *City Animals*, I learned how animals *and* children—both subject to ill treatment, exploitation and overwork during the 19th and early 20th centuries—gained legal protections through the efforts of the same set of advocates.

Hoboken’s position as the port of embarkation and debarkation for troops during World War I encouraged me to investigate the roles of horses, pigeons and dogs in the war effort, and their place in the public imagination on the home front. In addition to finding popular accounts of animal heroism such as *Ben the Battle Horse*, I found local newspaper photos of soldiers posing with a vast range of mascots brought back to Hoboken from the European front.

But as my research continued into the late 20th and early 21st centuries, when technology had mostly displaced animals, I found them increasingly marginalized—still present, but except for “pets,” receding from view, no longer perceived as living alongside humans. I began to focus on the ways in which animals sometimes draw people together, as city life becomes more fractured and faster paced, and Hobokenites are, more than ever, living alone.

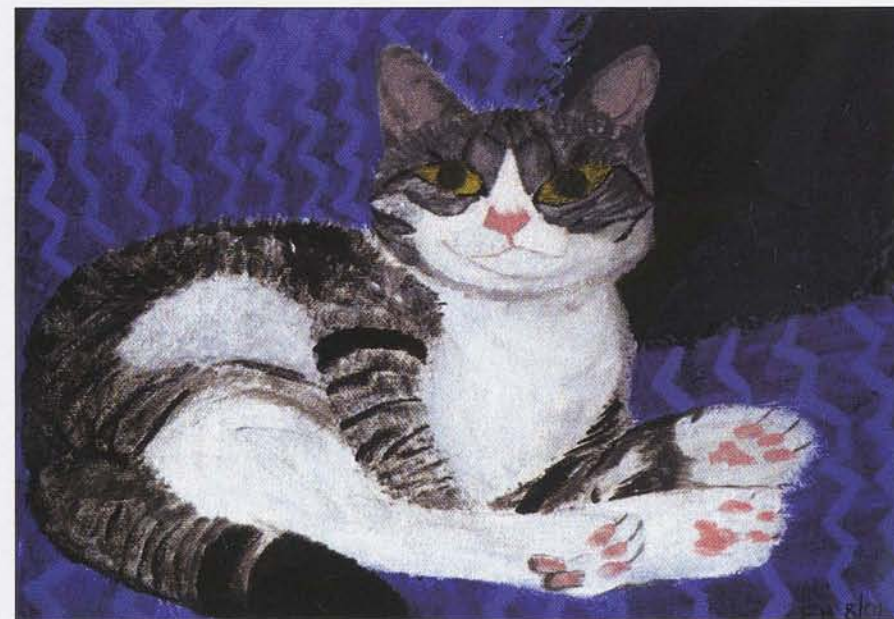


(The *average* household size in Hoboken, the 2000 U.S. Census tells us, is 1.92 persons; in 1950, the Census reported 3.21 persons per household as the city's average.) Hoboken birdwatchers post sightings to other birders on the Internet. In 2000, a small group of dog owners "dedicated to improving relations between local dog owners, the City, and the Hoboken community at large," formed the Hoboken Dog Association (HDA), which has worked with city representatives "to improve the city dog runs, modify existing dog regulations, and educate about responsible dog ownership in an urban environment." With membership "in the triple digits," HDA has its own logo, tee-shirts, stickers and hats, and maintains a website featuring a photo gallery, recommended books, recipes and local resources; it offers dog owners "a forum for sharing the unique experiences related to the special human/canine bond."¹³ Hoboken people draw together to rescue animals, too; and I hope members of the many local groups devoted to this work will come forward to contribute their stories, as time restraints kept me from collecting their histories.

As I talked about my research with Hoboken residents, I heard many stories of informal rescues, and chance street encounters involving animals that created a kind of chain reaction of caring acts among strangers. As one former resident, Elana Halberstadt, tells it, in the spring of 1999, she and her fiancé, Andy Turits, were summoned from the sidewalk of their apartment on Willow Avenue by a friend and neighbor. "Guys, you have to come see these kittens!" he called out to them. Holding the cardboard box was the animals' rescuer, Eileen "Honey" O'Leary, who has lived around the corner on

Willow Terrace for most of her life and who has long cared for neighborhood strays. O'Leary was trying to find homes for the kittens, born in her yard. She had never met Halberstadt and Turits before. The two peered into the box and were smitten. Halberstadt recalls how one kitten "stood out from all the rest in the cardboard box. She was about five weeks old and fit into the palm of my hand. Andy and I fell in love with her instantly and named her 'Ringo,' after the Beatle and because of the rings around her paws." A fully grown and quite contented Ringo became the subject of a Halberstadt painting four years later. Halberstadt's affection is unabashed. "Ringo came to us as a kind of healer during a difficult time in our lives and continues to be an essential part of our family," she says. "We think she is the best cat in the universe.

Left to right: Eileen "Honey" O'Leary holding Bogey in front of her Willow Terrace home, 1998. A lifelong animal lover, O'Leary became a Sinatra enthusiast later in life. Her changing window displays reflect her interests and celebrate special occasions and holidays. Photo by Robert Foster. Ringo at 5 weeks and Andy Turits holding Ringo, 1999. Courtesy Andy Turits and Elana A. Halberstadt. **Below:** Elana A. Halberstadt, *Ringo*, 2001, acrylic on canvas, 9" x 12." Courtesy of the artist.





Above: Laura Alexander, *Bones 2*, 1995, oil on canvas, 24" x 32," courtesy of the artist. Below: Laura Alexander, *Teddy*, 1998, oil on canvas, 33" x 46." Courtesy of Joe LeMonnier.



She is a constant reminder that often the best things in life are free and can be received through unplanned and fortunate accidents. She also teaches us that love is where you look for it—and it is everywhere."

In his essay, "Why Look At Animals?" (from which I selected this Introduction's epigraph), John Berger considers the ways the animal "first entered the human imagination." In what may be "the first existential dualism," he writes, an animal could be perceived both as a mortal individual—"an animal's blood flowed like human blood"—and also as part of an undying species—"each lion was Lion, each ox was Ox." The animal offered us companionship, too, "but always its lack of common language, its silence, guarantees its distance, its distinctiveness, its exclusion, from and of man." In the 20th century, Berger argues, this "parallelism of separate lives" was destroyed, as "the autonomy of both parties has been lost," so dependent on us have animals become, so dependent are we on having them mirror us.¹⁴ And while I recognize the truth in Berger's assertion, I also know that the animal's essential silence remains, though perhaps unattended; and to some in this city, the animal is yet an individual and also Dog or Cat or Bird. I see it in the contemporary paintings of Hoboken artist Laura Alexander, with *Bones* depicted in a wolfish, guarded crouch, eager to eat the kibble just outside of our view; I see it in her painting of *Teddy*, his coat so vividly rendered it evokes the feel and smell of Dog. To me, these paintings recall works by the 20th century figurative painter Alice Neel, with their intense insight into the individual. And yet, without descriptive backgrounds, these companion animals stand near but separate, distinct from us. Their lives, and even their love, are not only for us. The history that follows this Introduction has as its title *City Animals*, but it is a history of how we see them; and in the margins is all we do not know.

—Holly Metz

City Animals: Neighbors

More than one history of America's early naturalists has noted this irony: increased urbanization and industrialization in the nation's 19th century cities precipitated a greater appreciation of nature.¹ In fact, celebrated 20th-century naturalist Roger Tory Peterson has observed that the New York City region—"the world's greatest metropolis"—holds one of the longest records of active amateur field-work in ornithology and general natural history.²

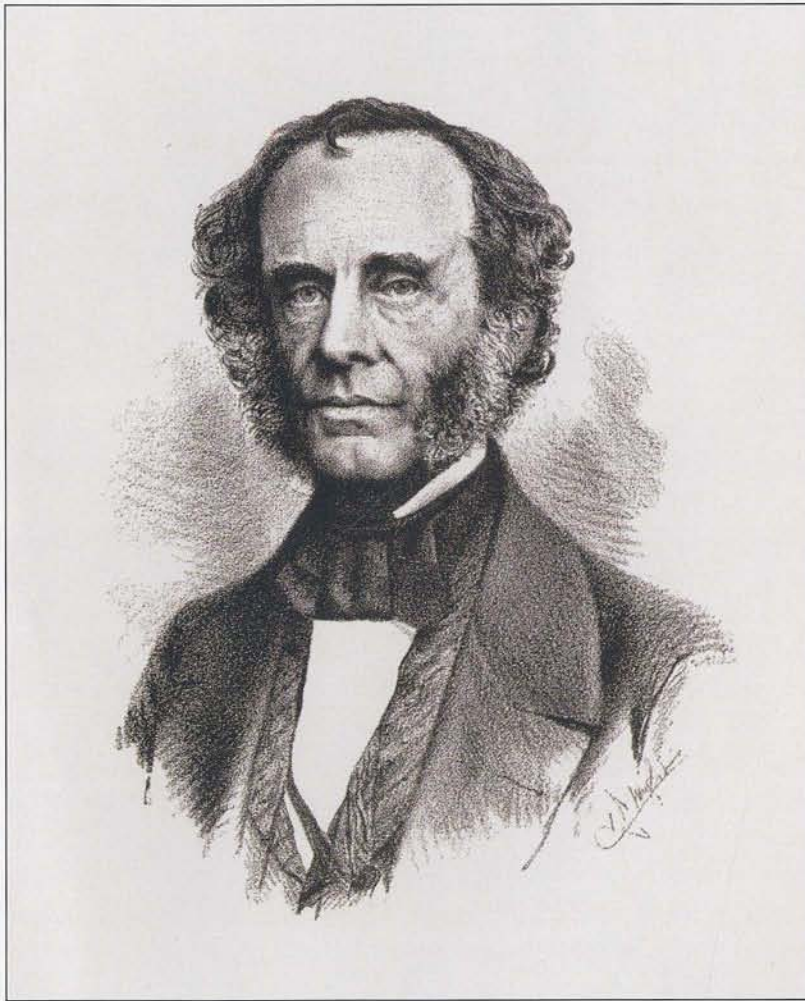
Hoboken's nearness to Manhattan, as well as its position, in the early 19th century, as gateway to a largely undeveloped Hudson County—Hoboken in 1834 was described as home to 700 inhabitants, a place "built chiefly on one street," with 100 dwellings and five stores, bordered to the west by several hundred acres of meadowland³—ensured its inclusion on the itinerary of New York City's leading naturalists. Notable among them was New York native William Cooper (1798-1864), son

of a wealthy English merchant, who later took up permanent residence in Hoboken. One of the founders of the Lyceum of Natural History (the members of which established the American Museum of Natural History in New York City), William Cooper was initially known for his study of "the fossil bones of gigantic animals," including pioneering work on a *Mastodon giganteum* skeleton discovered in New Jersey; but he soon developed a reputation for the careful collection and study of plants and birds of the Northern and Middle states.⁴

The recorded ornithological history of the New York City region actually began in the 1820s with the work of birders like Cooper. Writing for the American Museum of Natural History 100 years later, ornithologist Ludlow Griscom detailed the loss of East Coast habitat and wildlife population that had propelled this new and zealous accumulation of knowledge about the natural world. "This may be called the close of the period of greatest abundance" of bird life," which "lasted to about 1885," Griscom wrote. During this period, "the remnants of the original forest disappeared, market hunting on a large scale greatly decreased the number of what game birds remained, the demands of the millinery trade practically exterminated the Tern and Shore-



Left: Map of Jersey City, Hoboken & Suburbs (detail). Made for Water Commissioners, 1851. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.



Drawing of William Cooper from a *Biographical Sketch of the Late William Cooper of Hudson County, New Jersey*, 1864.

Wm. Cooper

bird colonies, and the popularity of many smaller birds as cage pets affected certain species like the Bobolink and the Mockingbird.”⁵

Though not as wanton and indiscriminate as the feather-loving hat trade or trophy-loving hunters, naturalists of the 19th- and early-20th centuries also contributed to the death toll. The perception that humans co-exist with animals in a shared environment was, it seems, trumped by the call of scientific discovery. Lacking the powerful camera lenses and binoculars of contemporary birdwatchers, these bird-lovers commonly killed their subjects to study them (a paradox not lost on all birders of the period⁶). William Cooper’s assembled and labeled collections (known as “cabinets”) were widely praised for their thoroughness and accuracy, using new scientific nomenclature that allowed scientists worldwide to organize and understand each others’ findings. He did not publish much—scientific works were then printed in America largely at private expense; there were no government publications then devoted to science except a few geological reports focused on the economic value of public lands; and colleges did not even recognize that the natural sciences could be separated from medicine or the arts—but William Cooper advanced the field of natural history considerably by allowing naturalists who *did* have support from the few existing scientific societies of the day, or who had private funders, to use his detailed notes and specimens. Recipients of Cooper’s generosity included John James Audubon (1785-1851), Thomas Nuttall (1786-1859), and Prince Charles-Lucien Bonaparte (1803-1857).

Bonaparte, son of Napoleon’s younger brother Lucien, who was later recognized as one of the world’s foremost authorities on birds, incorporated much information gathered by Cooper in his four-volume *American Ornithology* (1825 to 1833) which presented twenty newly identified species. Prominent among them was a hawk “shot by Mr. Cooper himself in Hudson County, New Jersey” and identified by Cooper as a new species. In fond recognition, Bonaparte named the hawk after the American naturalist. The migrant “Cooper’s Hawk” (*Accipiter cooperii*) may still be seen in New Jersey in April and mid-September into November.

In 1838, “considerations for his own health and that of his family” encouraged William Cooper to move from New York City to a farm on the banks of the Hudson, now the site of the village of Guttenberg. In 1853, after his eldest son graduated from medical school, Cooper “sold his farm and removed to Hoboken, desiring again to enjoy the advantages of city life, and also to remain in the neighborhood in which he had lived so long that it had become more homelike than the changed and changing city of New York.” Cooper served as a vestryman in St.



Above: Cooper's Hawk [Pl.24]. Hand-colored lithograph after John James Audubon, in: J.J. Audubon and J.B. Chevalier, *The Birds of America* (Philadelphia, 1840-44). Courtesy of Holly Metz. Inset: Hoboken Meadows, ca. 1890. Courtesy of the Hoboken Public Library, Historical Photographs Collection.

Paul's Episcopal Church on Hudson Street in Hoboken, and returned to his work in the natural sciences, identifying a collection of rare shells from Maine, Nova Scotia and the New York region during the ten remaining years of his life.

Within a little more than two decades of William Cooper's death, Hoboken too was a "changed and changing city"—no longer the green idyll that had lured visitors from overcrowded Manhattan to its Elysian Fields and Hudson River Walk. Although Hoboken had originally comprised 450 acres of meadowland and 270 of upland, and drainage of meadow areas had been ongoing under the direction of the Stevens family for many years, in 1885 the city's landscape changed dramatically as vast tracts were drained, filled or cleared for development. Two-hundred acres of upland and 160 acres of meadowland—once home to a broad range of insects, plants, birds and other animals—were built upon, and Hoboken's population nearly tripled (from 12,976 residents in 1865 to 37,721 in 1885.)⁷ Factories, mills, foundries and shipyards firmly established themselves in Hoboken, as they had in Manhattan.

Industrialization imperiled wildlife, but also, incongruously, through its introduction of easily available manufactured goods and changed work patterns, provided more Americans with "leisure time" to enjoy the natural world. Mid-19th century publications describe American city dwellers using their free hours to visit out-of-town meadows or to read about nature, and, in a new trend, to enjoy portfolios of prints depicting native flora and fauna, such as Audubon's popular and affordable octavo editions of *The Birds of America*, printed around 1840 after the success of a larger, pricier, edition.

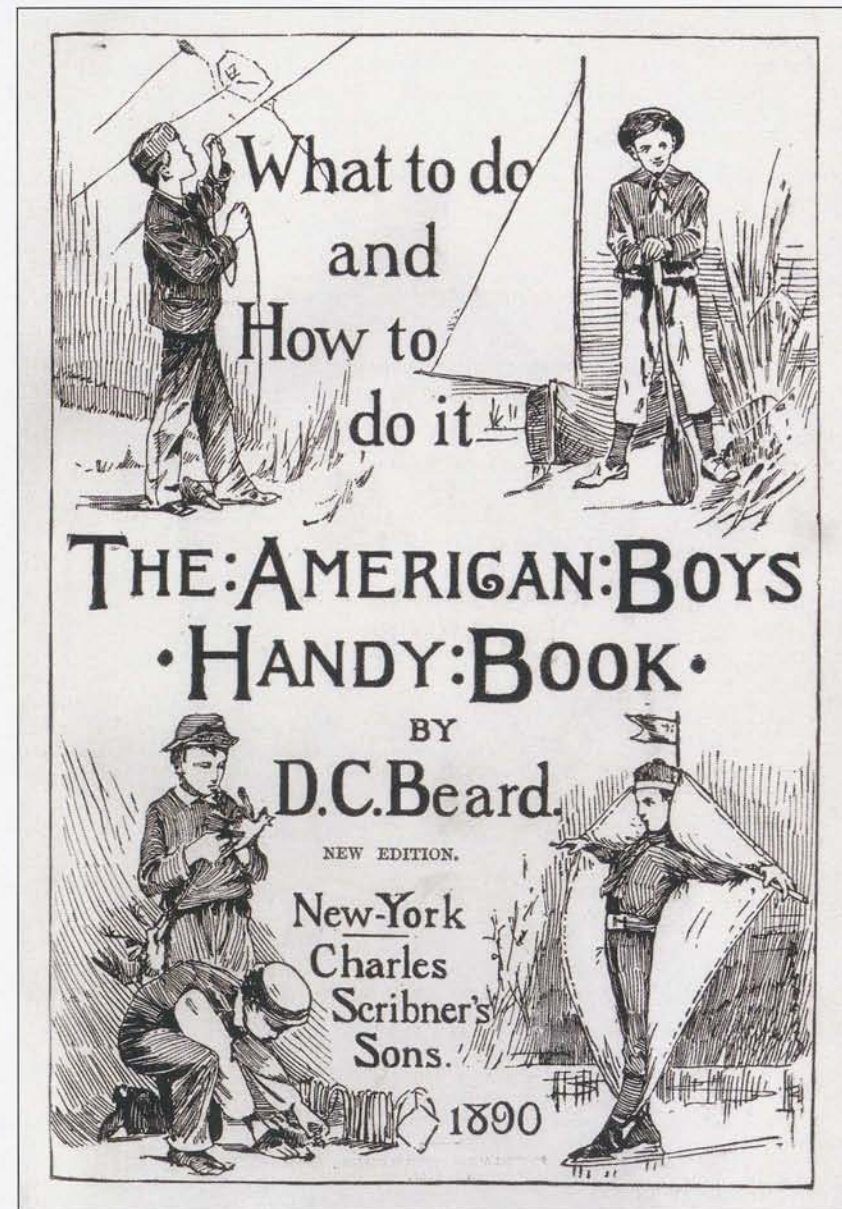
As New York and New Jersey cities grew in population and development expanded into suburbs, concerns about wildlife conservation intensified. Early battles in the region focused on efforts to establish limits to hunting (closed hunting seasons were introduced in New Jersey for certain game animals, such as deer, in 1847), followed by bans on "indiscriminate" hunting of songbirds and the abolition of the trade in feathers for hats and clothing, which was rapidly decimating native bird populations.⁸ Conservationists and naturalists sought change through education and legislation on the state and national levels. When S.P.C.A. founder Henry Bergh found Congress unreceptive to his idea that it create a government agency to protect wild animals and birds, he joined forces



with the newly formed New York Audubon Society, becoming its vice-president.⁹ Other bold initiatives—such as the establishment of the first national park at Yellowstone in 1872—did succeed, however, and continue to provide benefits to both human and wildlife populations.

Most 19th-century conservationists in the region were not promoting species protection because they considered wild animals intrinsically worthy, but because they wished to maintain nature as a resource. (This perspective continued to hold sway into the 20th century when the New Jersey Audubon Society installed a permanent display in 1913 at Atlantic City's Heinz Pier extolling the "economic value of birds.") By 1894 the New Jersey Fish & Game Protector and the U.S. Department of Agriculture had produced a circular encouraging schools to institute the observation of Bird Day, "to be devoted to instructing the children in the value of our native birds and the best means of protecting them," and, its creators hoped, to stamp out "the mania for collecting eggs and killing birds so deeply rooted in our boys." *The American Boys Handy Book*, a volume of seasonal games, amusements, and sports produced in 1882 by a founder of the scouting movement (and regularly reissued for fifty years) commonly included egg- and nest-collecting instructions in its pages, as well as designs for handmade traps and snares. The New Jersey Fish & Game publication made a case for the "inestimable value" of birds to humanity: "without their unremitting services our gardens and fields would be laid waste by insect pests." And it added another dimension: concerns about the moral impact of bird-killing on humans, a perspective actually encoded in some animal laws of the period. (See, for example, the *Workers* section of *City Animals*, pages 19-30.) "We should strive continually to develop and intensify the sentiment of bird protection, not alone for the sake of preserving the birds," admonished Secretary of Agriculture J. Sterling Morton, "but also for the sake of replacing as far as possible the barbaric impulses inherent in child nature by the nobler impulses and aspirations that should characterize advanced civilization."¹⁰

Along with those intent upon furthering a tragic craze for native songbirds as cage pets—an 1883 book by an East Coast pet-seller for example, listed more than a dozen wild North American birds deemed suitable for caging—a growing segment of the general population was clearly interested in studying birds out of doors. "During the past six years New York and Boston publishers have sold over 70,000 text-books on birds, and the ranks of bird students are constantly growing," wrote Frank M. Chapman, a zoologist at the American Museum of Natural History, in the inaugural issue of *Bird-Lore*, the



Frontispiece, D.C. Beard's *American Boys Handybook* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890).

bi-monthly magazine he founded in 1899, which later became *Audubon*. "With this phenomenal and steadily increasing interest in bird-studies, there has arisen a widespread demand for a popular journal of ornithology which should be addressed to observers rather than to collectors of birds, or, in short, to those who study birds through an opera-glass." By 1901, thirty-five states had Audubon societies, including an unincorporated New Jersey association.

WE GUARANTEE PERFECT SATISFACTION AND SHIP EVERYTHING ON APPROVAL 43

B1000—A Very Striking Hat in the Latest Fashion for Dress or Street Wear. The excellent shape of this fashionable hat, is very artistic and will be becoming to middle aged and elderly women. It is hand made on a wire frame, the head being beautifully formed of Proxylene braid, while the brim is trimmed with good quality jetted braid. Trimming consists of natural flowers, and natural grass in an aigrette effect. This is a very sensible, good looking and correct style. Comes in **BLACK** only. Price..... **\$3.67**

B1002—Medium Sized Modish French Hat, Hand Made on a Wire Frame. The shape is rolled on the left side and slightly drooping on the right. The hat is entirely made of all-over English lace, while the brim is edged with fancy Proxylene braid. The trimming consists of a beautiful silk rose, the silk extending entirely around crown. Additional trimming consists of an imparted wreath of six roses and foliage. This charming hat comes in **WHITE** only with **PINK ROSES**, **WHITE ROSES**, or **TEA ROSES**. This makes a very pretty dress hat and is **\$4.10** appropriate for all occasions. Price..... **\$4.10**

B1004—A Charming, Hand made Tyrolean Vogue hat will be becoming and stylish to all. The crown of this stylish hat is made of fine quality Proxylene braid, while the brim is made of latest effect in lustrous braid. The trimming consists of natural flowers and imitation aigrettes. This is one of the latest effects to be worn this season, is exceptionally well made and will be found very serviceable. It looks very pretty in **BLACK AND GOLD**, but also comes in **WHITE AND BLACK**, **BLACK AND WHITE** or **GOLD AND BLACK**, with trimmings to match. Price..... **\$3.25**

B1006—A Delightfully Chic Turban, of fine quality fancy braid, made on a wire frame, the crown being made of Proxylene braid and the brim effect trimmed with crimped Italian braid to match. The crown is completed with a trimming of six bunches of roses, buds and foliage, which are placed at intervals, making this model very attractive. This hat will be becoming to almost every type of face and we recommend it very strongly. It may be had in **BLACK**, a rich **CHAMPAGNE** or a stunning **WHITE**. Price..... **\$4.65**

B1008—This is One of the Most Favored Styles in Small Hats to be Worn this Season. It is hand made, on a wire frame. The crown is formed of draped Proxylene braid. The shape is slightly drooping on the right side and turned up on the left, while the underbrim is overlaid with velvet. A beautiful bouquet of three American beauty roses, with buds set in foliage, complete the trimming of this modest hat. It may be had in **BLACK**, a fashionable **CHAMPAGNE** or a dainty **WHITE**. You will certainly appreciate this hat when you see it and at the price quoted, it is an immense value. Price..... **\$5.43**

B1010—An Exceptionally Becoming Mushroom Shaped Hat. Hand made on a wire frame. The shape of this model is the very latest and given an additional attractive appearance by the crimped effect in brim. The crown and brim are made of Italian rough straw; while the crown is trimmed with a band of shirred tulle which extends entirely around to front. A beautiful bouquet of American beauty roses, buds and foliage complete the trimming of this classy model. This is without doubt one of the noblest hats to be shown this season for street wear and looks very chic in **BLACK**, but also comes **NAVY BLUE** or **NATURAL STRAW** color. Price..... **\$3.50**



Hat ads in Woolf's Incorporated Spring-Summer 1911 catalog. By 1911, some sellers of women's apparel were aware of women's growing rejection of feathered hats and made a point of advertising that their wares, as in this page from Woolf's Spring-Summer catalog, used materials such as grass, to imitate the appearance of aigrettes (sprays of feathers, often egret). The Woolf copywriter went so far as to boast that hats trimmed with imitation aigrettes were "one of the latest effects to be worn this season." Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

Naturalists observed firsthand the vulnerability of bird populations to habitat loss and human predation. "A village on Long Island supplied 70,000 skins for the hat trade in just four months," American Museum of Natural History curator of birds Joel A. Allen wrote to alarmed colleagues in an 1886 supplement to the journal *Science*. "One plume dealer prepared 11,000 dead birds in three months for shipment to New York, where a single millinery firm could transform 30,000 birds into adornment in one year." When the present New Jersey Audubon was incorporated in 1910, it included in its charter the goal of defeating the millinery trade. Many of the new birders were women who protested the slaughter of birds for fashion; as members of the Audubon Society or in women's clubs, they pledged to boycott feathered apparel.

Legislation fully protecting non-game birds, and prohibiting the possession or sale in New Jersey of any part of a wild bird, was finally passed in 1911, but not before the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and its coastal relative the Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) had been made nearly extinct by plume hunters. A familiar sight from New York/New Jersey harbor ferries prior to 1880, the Least Tern was not reported at any New Jersey nesting areas for three decades (1890-1919) and was feared lost. It has however, slowly returned to the state—first to Cape May, and in 1971, in the Meadowlands—making it a "neighbor" once more to city dwellers.

More than pigeons or "English" Sparrows have survived in Hoboken through the 20th century—though naturalists point out that most of the animals that do survive in American cities are imports. (See side-bars, *Introducing Neighbors* and *Bird-Watching, from Guns to Glass*.) Still, late in the century there continued to be sightings of native birds, some rescued by protective measures from certain oblivion. Songbirds and hawks were safeguarded when the Migratory Treaty Act of 1918 was passed, as thousands of both would be killed in a single day during migration season. An urban forester in residence in Hoboken during the late 1970s counted many hawks in the city, though he was reluctant to advertise their presence, lest anyone disturb or take potshots at them. For seven or eight years, Robert Hill chartered "the city's natural secrets," recording "opossums, muskrats... and a few other creatures one wouldn't expect in an urban center." The hawks, a *Jersey Journal* reporter asserted, were "part of the return of wildlife to the metropolitan area. Cloaked in anonymity, Hill contends, the birds are probably better off. 'They are nesting on top of a building,' he said, smiling contentedly. 'No one knows about them... which is fine.'" ¹¹

It is yet unclear how recent, vigorous development in the 21st century, in

long underused portions of Hoboken (notably in the northwestern “industrial” portion) will affect perimeter-dwelling mammals and birds. New construction is not only likely to flush some animals out into open areas, it may also encourage the appearance of other wildlife, drawn to new sources of food, shelter, or even the manicured lawns that sometimes front contemporary developments.

Bird-Watching, from Guns to Glass

“Bearing in mind...the majority of bird-lovers now happily use the glass instead of the gun, the problem of identifying birds in life has largely replaced the problem of how to get near enough to kill them,” ornithologist Ludlow Griscom wrote with some relief in his 1923 introduction to *Birds of the New York City Region*. He did not say that he had been one of the pioneers of this non-lethal practice among early birders. Protective legislation and, even more, technological advances—the availability of modern prism binoculars and guidebooks with color plates advocating sight identification—made birding less deadly for its subjects and, with the ease of travel brought by automobiles, opened the field to more enthusiasts. Birding was a well-established activity by 1934 when Roger Tory Peterson’s *A Field Guide to the Birds* was published; although it was published during the Great Depression, the first edition of 2,000 sold out in a week. By 1964, ornithologist John Bull would enthuse in his historical overview to *Birds of the New York Area* that the field had grown from “probably less than 100 observers in 1920 [in the NYC area] to thousands today.” The urbanization and industrialization that threatened native bird populations, writes Jen Hill in *An Exhilaration of Wings*, sometimes resulted in the adaptation of those birds “to their new urban surroundings—as many a New York City dweller today will attest—which led to an entirely new kind of bird-watching: the pursuit of the urban bird.”¹²

Newspaper accounts in the 20th and now the 21st century report “sightings” of rare or returning birds in Hudson County. A 1938 *Jersey Journal* article made much of the discovery of an owl in the city; the migrating bird, described as “resembling a little old man,” was trapped in a chicken coop by fearful residents unsure of how to handle a perceived interloper. Today city dwellers are encouraged by environmentalists to watch for the snowy owls

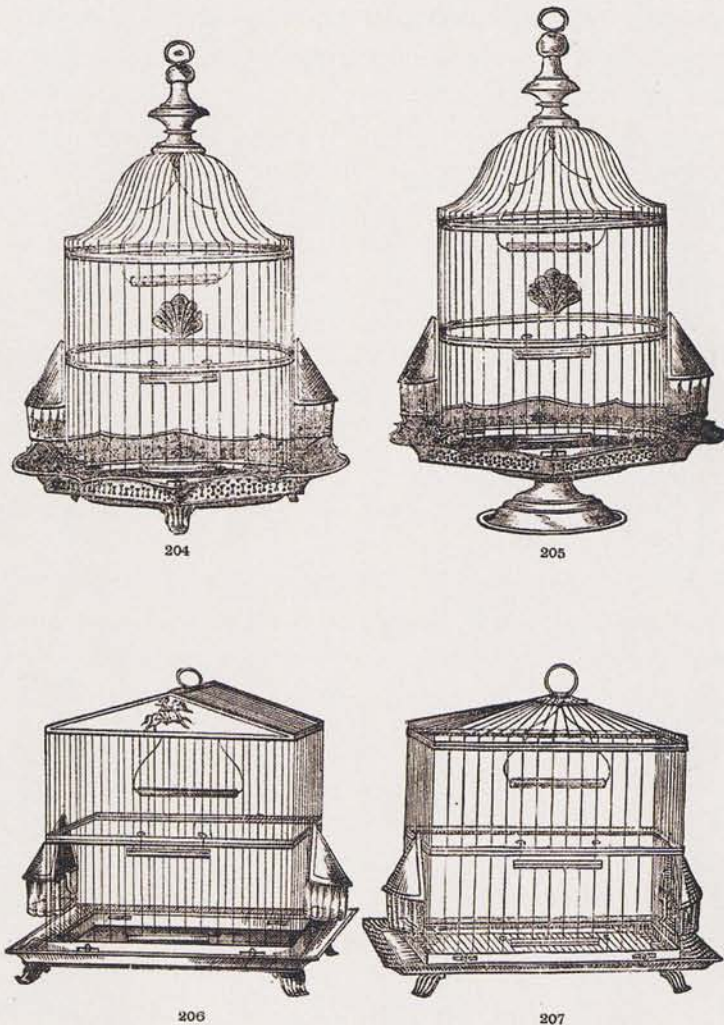
that visit Jersey City’s Liberty State Park, which was transformed from an abandoned railroad property into the state’s largest urban park.

As bird-watching and nature study continue to be popular national pursuits—in 2001, a national survey conducted by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service reported that 31 percent of all Americans fed, photographed or observed wildlife—contemporary city birders reach for the technological tools of our age: digital cameras, binoculars, the Internet.¹³ The local sighting of a red-throated loon by Hoboken bird watchers Mary Nichols and Jean-Paul Picard was quickly posted on the Internet, where computer-users may also find the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s “falcon cam,” and a view of two adult Peregrine Falcons (and any offspring they might have) atop a building in Jersey City. Their return to the area is, after considerable habitat loss and near decimation by the toxic insecticide DDT, a tenuous victory for environmentalists. Some city dwellers are well pleased by the falcons’ dispatch of despised street pigeons and rats. In 1964, Roger Tory Peterson had lamented in his foreword to John Bull’s *Birds of the New York Area* that “the Peregrine Falcon, finest of all birds, is gone from nearly every eyrie in the Hudson Valley and its environs.” Now it is no longer so; and it calls to mind a contemporary naturalist’s observation that bird-watching is an activity that not only connects us to “a history of the natural world, but the history of human experience,” as contemporary birdwatchers echo the actions of birders of more than two centuries ago—but with glass, not guns.¹⁴

Introducing Neighbors

So familiar is the **House or English Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*) today that most city residents would be surprised to learn it was introduced from Europe to North America in 1850, in New York City. Beloved by immigrants from Europe, where it prospered in close proximity to humans, the House Sparrow was initially imported with the notion that it would eat the insects that were stripping leaves from New York City trees. (The loss of habitat brought about by urbanization had pushed out many insect-eating native birds.) Through repeated imports, and assisted by plentiful supplies of grain in the nation’s new cities, the House Sparrow happily bred and spread across

JAPANNED CANARY CAGES.



Page from New York bird and cage seller George H. Holden's 1883 *Canaries & Cage Birds*. Along with information on the trapping and raising of tropical and native birds, Holden's catalog included lists of birds and Japanned cages for birds, mice and squirrels.

North America. Unhappily for its importers, the House Sparrow proved not to be a very proficient insect-eater; and, even worse, the aggressive new bird drove away the native species that *were*. It fouled parks with droppings and clogged frame houses with nests. By 1875, the House Sparrow was widely viewed as a *pest*. Its devolution in the public mind, and nationwide campaigns to exterminate it, are detailed in the *Pests & Strays* portion of *City Animals* (pages 46-54).

Hoboken bird-lovers, too, tried their hand at introducing a European bird to America, but with only short-lived success (or, considering the example of other introductions, short-lived problems.) In 1878 the **European Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*) was introduced at Hoboken; it appeared in Central Park the next year, spread northward, then began to fall off in numbers. Although the species temporarily established in 1910 in Englewood, New Jersey, and in Massapequa, Long Island—after additional releases—subsequent building booms destroyed its habitat. By 1923 ornithologist Ludlow Griscom noted in *Birds of the New York City Region*: "Only a very few stragglers have been reported in the last ten years, and while it is too early to say that the bird is extirpated, its introduction can be declared a hopeless failure." Occasional sightings in New Jersey of this "very pretty European species" have been attributed to recent cage-bird escapes.¹⁵

Far more successful—"from the bird's point of view," quips garden writer Charles Elliott—was the introduction to North America of the **European Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) by a wealthy New York drug manufacturer who wanted to introduce every bird mentioned in Shakespeare's works into the United States. In 1880 he released 80 starlings in Central Park and the following year introduced another 40. By 1904, starlings were reported in New Jersey, Connecticut and upstate New York. With few predators in American cities, the European Starling thrived; by 1950 it was well established in the 48 contiguous states and Canada.¹⁶

A more recent avian introduction should also be noted: the **House Finch** (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), a native of the western United States and Mexico, was introduced in New York City in 1940 and has since become a permanent resident of New Jersey. Ornithologists warn it may reach "pest proportions." Keeping in mind the human-avian history of the House Sparrow, House Finches may soon be the focus of eradication and control efforts. Interestingly, the House Finch is considered a competitor with the House Sparrow, which has had a recent population decline.

The 1820 Gentleman's *New Pocket Farrier* makes plain 19th-century Americans' reliance on the worker horse. "Among the great number of animals under the controul of man, the excellent horse, unquestionably, is the most serviceable," its author, medical doctor Richard Mason, wrote in a preface (original spelling retained). Unlike most veterinary books published in the U.S. prior to 1830, Mason's *New Pocket Farrier* did not simply rework the writings of British authors, but specifically addressed American practices and concerns:

*In every species of farming, the horse bears the principal burden, and is the means of increasing wealth and happiness. In the transportation of foreign growth and manufactures, to the interior of our country, and the exportation of the produce of the United States, the faithful horse affords a speedy conveyance to and from the water's edge. For the quick communications by posts and stages, even with the most remote parts of the union, we are indebted to the horse. Even our happy republican government has been established, protected, defended and administered, by the means and aid of those noble animals. Men, of every profession, must all acknowledge the benefit derived from him.*¹

During the 19th century, horses were essential for "turning the wheels of commerce."² That was certainly true in Hoboken. Once it began, the industrialization and urbanization of the city was rapid. Land was cleared for building and factory sites; Hoboken's population grew by almost 50,000 from 1860 to 1900.³ More and more people had to be transported, an increasing number of tools and supplies conveyed. Working animals were needed for all these tasks—horses foremost among them. In the city of Hoboken—despite the presence of riding trails and academies from the mid-19th century until the early part of the 20th—the vast majority of horses were "beasts of burden," until new technologies relieved them from most of their former work.

Right: Broadside, Hoboken Ferry, 1853, indicating the many commercial uses of horses for cartage—with ferry transport prices to match. From the collections of the New Jersey Historical Society.

City Animals: Workers

Reduced Rates of Ferriage AT THE HOBOKEN FERRY MARCH 14, 1853.			
		CENTS.	
EVERY PERSON ON FOOT ABOVE TEN YEARS OLD.....	3	FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL PERSON	3
UNDER TEN AND ABOVE FIVE YEARS OLD.....	2	A CART WITH DRIVER, ONE HORSE LOADED OR EMPTY.....	12½
MAN AND HORSE, OR HORSE ONLY	9	A WAGON LOAD OF STRAW OR HAY, WITH TWO HORSES AND ONE PERSON.....	50
ORDINARY FOUR-WHEELED TRUCK LOADED, TWO HORSES AND ONE PERSON.....	37½	A WAGON OR CART LOAD OF HAY OR STRAW, WITH ONE HORSE AND ONE PERSON.....	37½
ORDINARY FOUR-WHEELED TRUCK, LIGHT, TWO HORSES AND ONE PERSON.....	25	ANY KIND OF CARRIAGE OR SLEIGH WITHOUT HORSE, HALF PRICE.	
ORDINARY WAGONS, OR MARKET WAGONS, INCLUDING LOADS OF GREEN CLOVER AND GRASS, TWO HORSES AND ONE PERSON	25	A WHEELBARROW AND ONE PER- SON, LOADED OR EMPTY.....	6
FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL PERSON	3	A HAND CART AND ONE PERSON, LOADED OR EMPTY.....	8
ORDINARY WAGONS, OR MARKET WAGONS, INCLUDING LOADS OF GREEN CLOVER OR GRASS, ONE HORSE AND ONE PERSON	12½	CATTLE, SINGLE OR IN DROVES, Each.....	15
FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL PERSON	3	CALVES, SHEEP AND HOGS, Each	3
A COACH, COACHEE, CHARIOT, BAROUCHE, PHAETON, PLEA- SURE WAGON, OR SLEIGH WITH MORE THAN ONE SEAT, TWO HORSES, ONE PERSON.....	30	Rates of Commutation for Three Months:	
FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL PERSON,	3	MALES OF 17 YEARS AND UP- WARDS.....	\$3 00
A LIGHT PLEASURE CARRIAGE, BAROUCHE OR PLEASURE WAG- ON, TWO HORSES, ONE PERSON	25	MALES BETWEEN 14 AND 17 YEARS	1 50
FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL PERSON	3	MALES UNDER 14 YEARS OF AGE	1 00
A LIGHT PLEASURE CARRIAGE, BAROUCHE OR PLEASURE WAG- ON, ONE HORSE, ONE PERSON.....	12½	FEMALES OF 14 YEARS OF AGE AND UPWARDS.....	1 50
		FEMALES UNDER 14 YEARS OF AGE.....	1 00
A. O. EVANS, STRAM PRINTER, HOBOKEN.			

Horses provided all manner of public and private transportation in the city, even, in the early part of the century, travel *across* the Hudson River: Hoboken ferries were literally driven by “horse power” prior to 1811 and the launching of Colonel John Stevens’s steam ferry. Hoboken’s horse cars—horse-drawn street cars, with the first line chartered in 1859—were also gradually replaced (by electric trolleys, beginning in 1907), but not before their rush-hour ridership became so excessive that an average car designed for twenty-two passengers would often carry three times that number. One horse—or sometimes a mule—would then struggle to haul several tons of weight on smooth rails frequently slick with ice or littered with rocks. It was not a luxurious way to travel, nor an easy task for animals working in all weather.⁴ (Overworking and the consequent maiming of New York City’s streetcar horses would eventually become a cause of demonstrations by the fledgling Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the subject of considerable press attention; local S.P.C.A. representatives also took on this problem.)

The Hoboken & Hudson City Horse Car Railroad began with seven horse cars operating on five miles of track, bringing passengers from the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad ferry and terminal, along Ferry Street (now known as Observer Highway), into Jersey City Heights, and ending at the Hudson County Court House. The company merged in 1865 with the



Horse car on Washington Street, near Eleventh Street, summer of 1891. Hoboken Historical Museum Collection.

North Hudson County Railway, increasing the miles of track, and the number of cars and horses. Several lines of horse cars served busy Washington Street: at 11th Street one moved west to Willow Avenue, then to Weehawken and West New York; a second left Willow at 15th Street to climb a trestle to Jersey City Heights; another continued to the 14th Street Ferry Terminal.

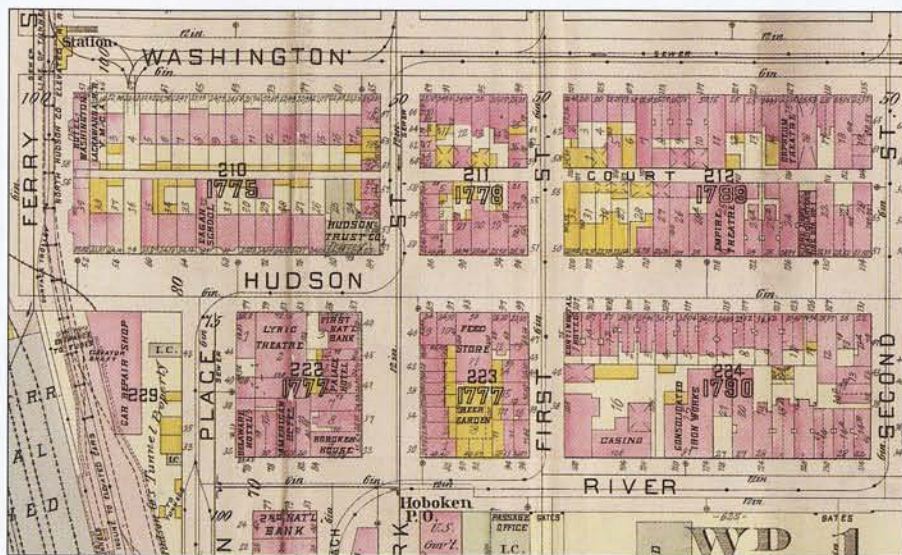
The steep climb from sea level Hoboken to Jersey City Heights atop the Palisades was grueling for passengers and horses—and expensive for the operators. To pull the weight of just one car up the



Freight wagon using the Hoboken Wagon Elevator, 1915. Reproduced by the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society. Courtesy of Leon Yost.

hill, four horses were needed, and even then, the strain was so great that exhausted horses had to be replaced frequently. But the horse-car was indispensable to public transportation riders of the period, so a solution was sought—and found—that would accommodate horses (and increase speed and profit): The North Hudson County Railway commissioned a Hoboken civil engineer, Thomas H. McCann, to devise the world’s first horse car elevator. Opening in November 1874 to considerable press fanfare, this mammoth, steam-powered, double-track platform contraption hoisted in one minute horse-drawn vehicles from the western slope of Hoboken’s Ferry Street up the steep, 102-foot-high face of the Palisades to the Heights.⁵ (McCann is also known for drawing the plans for the first rail tunnel under the Hudson River. Although the 1874 venture by Dewitt Clinton Haskins and his Hudson Tunnel Railroad Company did not succeed, later efforts did connect New Jersey and New York City, and those tunnels are now part of the Port Authority’s PATH rapid-transit system.)

By 1886, a new viaduct had opened from the ferry to the top of the Palisades, replacing the horse car line. Horse-drawn freight wagons, however, continued to use the elevator until May 1928.



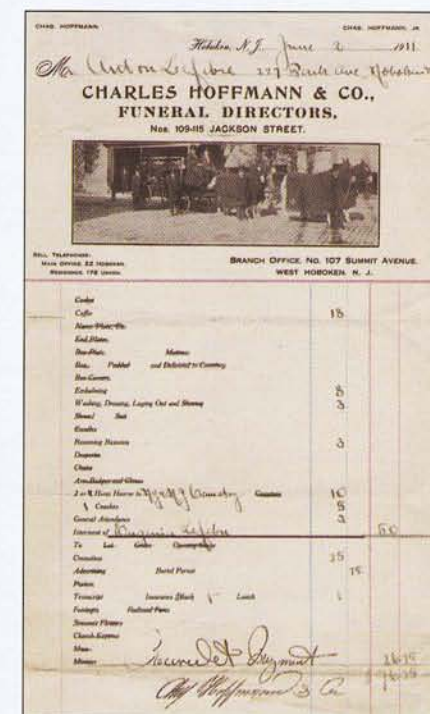
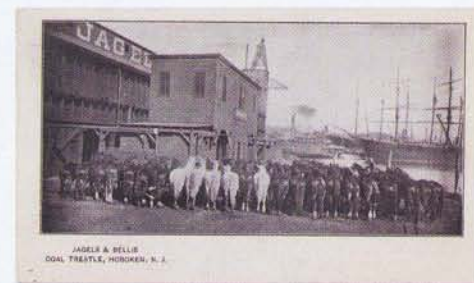
Map of Hudson County, New Jersey, detail Vol. 2, Plate 1, (Philadelphia, PA: GM Hopkins, Co., 1909) shows numerous “sheds or stables”—indicated by an ‘x’ through the squared-off area—within a few blocks downtown. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

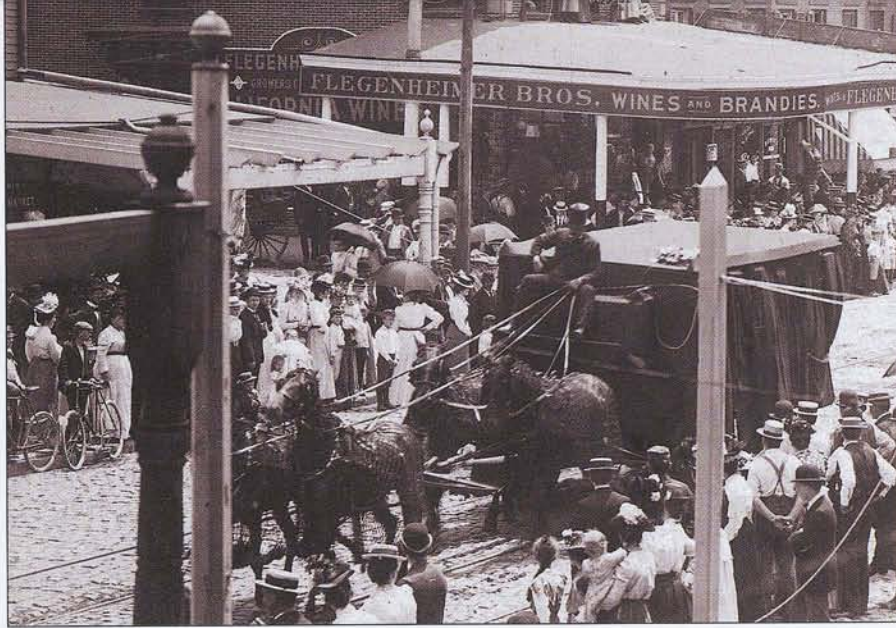
Plat books mapping land use in the city during 1909 show the ubiquitousness of the worker-horse in the turn-of-the-century landscape. Hoboken's urban grid was regularly punctuated by stables, with block-long structures built for companies involved in cartage. Other animals may have been used for commercial cartage in Hoboken, as they were in some cities, but evidence is scant: mid-19th century New York City newspapers referred to the use of dogs to pull milk and rag carts there, yet no mention of such practices in Hoboken has been found in New York or New Jersey newspapers consulted for this project. And though the *Jersey Journal's* early 20th-century "For Sale & Exchange" columns did occasionally include ads for "a team of goats and harness," the animals were likely used in that capacity to amuse children. Earlier newspaper reports objected to boys of "ten to twelve years of age" hitching goats to wagons and riding in them; their activities were not only cruel, the reporters asserted, but the carts blocked sidewalks and "the unsavory smell of the animal heated by exercise is anything but sweetness."⁶

Evidence of the central role of the horse in the commercial life of the city appears again and again in advertising photographs of the period: a Hoboken coal company displays in its yard row upon row of horses, waiting with carts to serve a vast public; a horse pulling a fine carriage conveys the quality to be found at a fancy First Street florist; a Jackson Street funeral director's stationery depicts a four-horse hearse, suggesting a most impressive statement for those most dearly departed.

Of course, horses also appear in documentary images of extraordinary late 19th- and early 20th-century public events, such as the massive Washington Street funeral procession of somber mourners and crepe-decorated horse-drawn carriages that followed “one of the most destructive fires ever heard of in this country”—the June 30, 1900, “Great Hoboken Pier Fire” that engulfed the North German Lloyd piers and three ocean liners, and killed more than 300 passengers and longshoremen.⁷ Several Hoboken Fire Department horses died in the 1900 disaster, too, though their loss goes unmentioned in even the most exhaustive newspaper accounts of “the worst disaster in the history of the New York Harbor involving ocean shipping.”⁸ Notice of their deaths appears, rather, in the 1901 annual report of

From top to bottom: Horses were used for “turning the wheels of commerce.” Postcard ca. 1907, horses and coal wagons lined up at Jagels & Bellis Coal Yards, 14th St., courtesy Robert Foster. Horse and florist cart, First St., ca. 1900, Hoboken Historical Museum collection; Stationery, Charles Hoffman & Co. Funeral Directors, 109-115 Jackson St., 1911, Hoboken Historical Museum collection.





Funeral procession on Washington Street for crewmembers and longshoremen who died in the 1900 Hoboken Pier Fire. Courtesy of the Hoboken Public Library.

the Hoboken Fire Department, which detailed the previous year's occupational service. Twenty-one fire horses—haulers of engines, hose wagons, hook and ladder trucks and the Chief's wagon—accompanied fifty-nine firefighters to subdue the infamous 1900 blaze. The *Report of the Chief Engineer of the Hoboken Fire Department* describes a fire so ferocious it took eight days to be entirely extinguished. In the early stages of the Great Fire, the Chief notes, the men of Engine Co. 5, while positioned on Fourth Street between Hudson and the riverfront, were faced with a sudden wall of flames that "compel[ed] the men to flee for their lives, leaving their horses, hose wagon, and seven hundred feet of hose, all of which were totally destroyed."

Veterinary Science: For Man and Beast

The development of veterinary medicine was propelled by the considerable investment required in purchasing and maintaining a horse, according to Ray Thompson, a historian of Garden State veterinary science.⁹ At least two Hoboken veterinarians were pioneers in professionalizing this vocation, which had been previously unregulated, unlicensed and prone to quackery. Dr. David Dixon, an 1881 graduate of the private American Veterinary College, had a veterinary hospital at 66 Washington Street and was elected co-vice president at the first meeting of the New Jersey Veterinary Medical

Association (NJVMA) in 1884. Dr. Richard R. Letts, an 1889 graduate of the same veterinary institution, was elected NJVMA president in 1891, after he had moved from Jersey City (where he inspected cattle in the Central Stockyards) to Hoboken (where he became veterinary surgeon for the volunteer fire department.)¹⁰

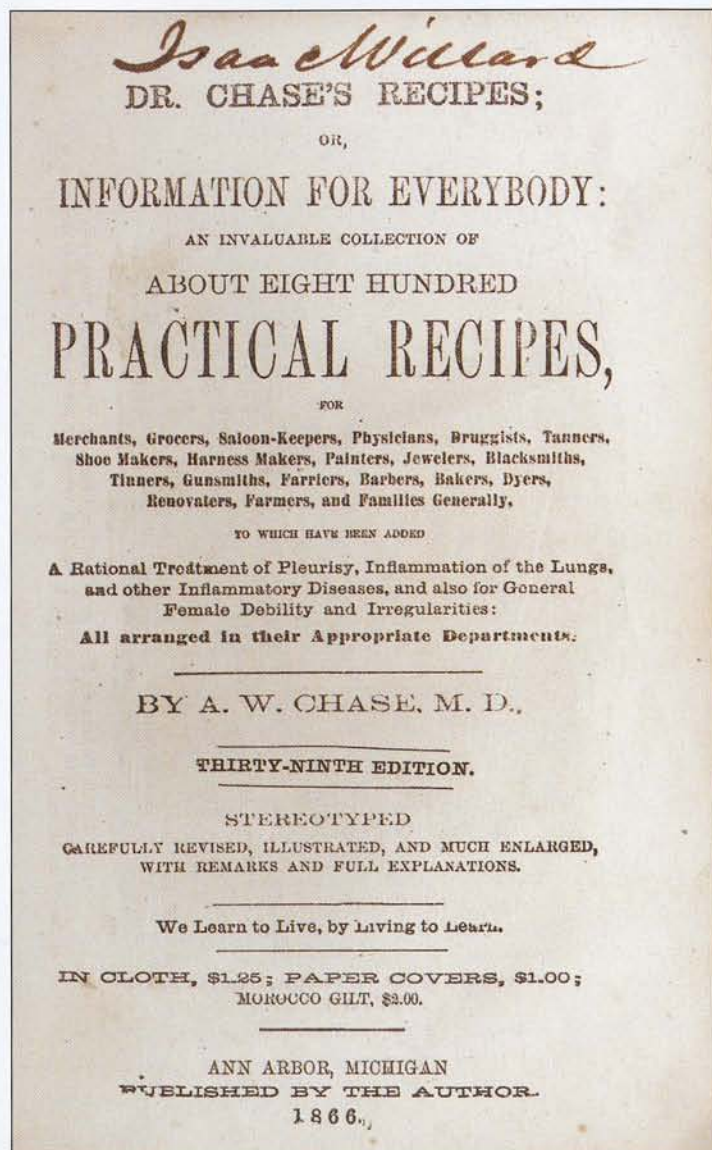
Prior to this new wave of formally educated veterinarians, early 19th century veterinary medicine was mostly based on stock remedies practiced by farriers, who primarily shod horses; hostlers or mule-keepers; ex-jockeys and empirics who relied on experience alone in their ministering to commercially valuable animals. Knowledge might be obtained by serving an apprenticeship with an established "self-proclaimed healer," notes Thompson. Published texts often promoted bizarre and cruel cures for horses and sometimes cattle, swine or sheep. The 1827 *Collection of New Receipts and Approved Cures for Men and Beast* by Daniel Ballmer of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, for example, offered horse-owners the following "cure for the wind colick":

Knock down a black chicken with the butt end of a whip and tear it to pieces as quickly as you can, but if you can't tear it, cut it open and take out all the entrails, then cram it down the horse's throat with your whip. This will prove a cure for the wind colick so that the horse will never get it again.

Some American vets learned their trade by reading "articles in almanacs and weekly agricultural journals or by attending lectures on the care of domestic animals given to members of agricultural societies or to medical students," writes Thompson, though he argues that many practitioners were probably "not educated well enough to read them." (Indeed, the earliest private veterinary schools of the 1850s were flexible in their requirement that applicants have an elementary or grade school diploma.)

Throughout most of the 1800s, quacks offered bogus remedies for a fee; some animal caretakers of the period actually followed prescriptives such as "feeding a cow a stolen dishrag will cure indigestion" and "feeding a hornet's nest to a horse will cure distemper." To distinguish themselves from such charlatans, the members of the NJVMA adopted a Code of Ethics in 1885, prohibiting "the promising of radical cures" and the "advertisement of secret remedies," disrespectful pronouncements about other veterinarians,

Below: Title page, *Dr. Chase's Recipes; or, Information For Everybody*, the thirty-ninth edition, published in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1866, of "An Invaluable Collection of About Eight Hundred Practical Recipes" for curing diseases, mixing paint, shoeing horses, etc. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.



"Scenes at the American Veterinary College Clinic," around 1880, from *Harper's Weekly*. Hoboken veterinarians Dixon and Letts attended this college; it offered free clinics two afternoons a week, and included care for dogs as well as horses.

and "double dealing" by "giving of opinions regarding the purchase and sale of horses."

By the late 1880s, when the NJVMA was founded, the state of New Jersey still had only a few university or college-educated veterinarians. Some learned the veterinary art from newly arrived immigrant veterinarians, who received formal training in Europe (there were a few such practitioners in Hoboken by the end of 19th century, as the list on page 24 indicates.) The twenty New Jersey practitioners who met in a Newark veterinarian's office to organize this veterinary association were both graduates and non-graduates of veterinary colleges.

At the urging of the NJVMA, the State Legislature approved an act in 1889 that called upon veterinary college graduates and non-graduates in practice five years or more to register, for the fee of \$1, with the county clerk in their county of residence. If unqualified for registration but practicing, one would face a fine of \$100 or a jail term of up to one year,

or both. About 350 veterinarians registered statewide, though records do not indicate how many actually practiced in the state. It was a rather high number for the period, however, as there were only several thousand veterinarians in the entire United States by the late 19th century. In the 1900 *Veterinary Medical Register of the State of New Jersey*, in addition to Dr. David Dixon, the following Hoboken practitioners are listed:

Philander G. White, 45 Washington Street, "Existing Practitioner,"

Date of Registry: September 4, 1889

Ferdinand Huppe, 87 Garden Street, College: Veterinary School
of Cleve, Prussia; Date of Diploma: March 15, 1880;

Date of Registry: June 24, 1890

Charles Patrzek, 233 Park Avenue, College: The Royal Board of Examiners
of Berlin, certified by the Department of Agriculture, Berlin;

Date of Registry: December 11, 1893

Edward K. Stretch, 728 Park Avenue, College: New York College
of Veterinary Surgeons; Date of Diploma: April 1, 1897;

Date of Registry: April 14, 1897

During this period, Thompson notes, New Jersey veterinarians also began to play an active role in protecting public health, as the bacterial cause of disease began to be understood. Domestic animals and people lived in close quarters, escalating the potential for the spread of horse-to-human communicable diseases like glanders. In an increasingly densely populated city like Hoboken (which saw its population rise from 9,659 in 1860 to 37,721 in 1885 to 70,324 in 1910) such concerns were especially pronounced. The dean of the New York-based American Veterinary College was known for encouraging graduates (including some who moved to Hoboken) to become sanitarians or public health specialists. New Jersey vets began to initiate changes in milk and meat inspection; and in 1881 the New Jersey Board of Health became one of the first state agencies in the country to employ veterinary specialists empowered to kill or quarantine animals exposed to contagious or infectious disease.

The Veterinary Practitioners' Club of Hudson County, a local association of NJVMA, was formed in 1907 to address local issues including "zoning ordi-

nances regulating veterinary hospitals, illegal and unfair practices, fees, local meat and milk inspection, and employment of vets by municipal and county governments." New Jersey law regarding veterinary practice had already been strengthened in 1902 to allow for the establishment of a board to assess practitioner competency. It was authorized to give oral or written exams on subjects such as veterinary anatomy, surgery, obstetrics, pathology, bacteriology, pharmacy and meat and milk inspection.

The practice of veterinary medicine largely revolved around the horse until the introduction of the motor vehicle. Veterinarians who stayed in cities after the replacement of the worker horse with automobiles and trucks would have to shift their care to small companion animals. (See the *Companions & Family* section of *City Animals*, pages 55-59, for more on this shift.)

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

In large part, the value of "the noble horse, which is so important an agent in civilization," and the cost of cruelty and ill treatment, inspired New Yorker Henry Bergh, a "gentleman of means," to found the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1866.¹¹ Bergh biographers refer to a scene he'd observed earlier, while on diplomatic post in St. Petersburg, Russia, as an influence on his thinking about humane treatment of animals. Passing in his carriage, Bergh saw a teamster's horse and wagon had become lodged in mud and the driver was savagely beating the trapped horse. Bergh directed his Russian-speaking driver to tell the man to stop—an intervention (on behalf of a beast) said to be unheard of in that country. When Bergh's post ended in 1865, he traveled to the United Kingdom and met with the Earl of Harrowly, head of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which had been founded forty years prior.

Fired with purpose and awareness of the advances of British anti-cruelty predecessors, the socially well-connected Bergh began, on his return to New York, to gather signatures of supporters of an *American S.P.C.A.* His proposal was enthusiastically received by many: There was already some opinion among prestigious New Yorkers that favored a change in the treatment of animals. (Indeed, American society had already significantly changed its perspective toward animals, legal scholars note, as the 19th century began



Henry Bergh, founder of the ASPCA. Courtesy of the ASPCA.

with laws “viewing animals as items of personal property not much different than a shovel or plow,” and had advanced, during the first half of the century, to begin recognizing “an animals’ potential for pain and suffering was real and deserving of protection against its unnecessary infliction”—though such protections were limited to commercially valuable animals, not wild animals or dogs and cats.¹²) The publisher of *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* printed a series of drawings in 1865 showing animal cruelty.

A New York street scene sketched by illustrator Albert Berghaus and entitled “City Enormities—every brute can beat his beast” depicted several men in caps wielding whips and clubs against a horse harnessed to a cart. A policeman appeared in the background, standing at the curb, watching, with his arms crossed. Frank Leslie accompanied this image with an editorial, “The Brutalities of the Town,” in which he announced: “Our first page offers an illustration of every day sights in New York, one of those brutalities that there is apparently no law for... We do not claim cruelty to animals as something patent to New York. Unfortunately it is not...”¹³

Henry Bergh recruited to his cause an impressive range of powerful individuals, including several Civil War heroes, a Catholic Archbishop, millionaire John Jacob Astor, editor-poet William Cullen Bryant, editor and publisher Horace Greeley, manufacturer Peter Cooper, and attorney John T. Brady, who drafted a charter for the S.P.C.A. to be recognized by the New York State legislature as a state corporation. The legislature—no doubt persuaded by the influence of Bergh and his associates—granted the charter in 1866 despite opposition from horse-car companies and abattoirs that feared (correctly) that the new organization would interfere with their operations. Following the British model, Bergh made sure his new organization had enforcement power of “all laws which are now or may hereafter be enacted for the protection of animals and to secure, by lawful means, the arrest and conviction of all persons violat-



Top right: “City Enormities—every brute can beat his beast,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, October 28, 1865. Picture Collection, The Branch Libraries, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

ing such laws.”¹⁴ Brady then drew up a pioneering anti-cruelty law, which Bergh succeeded in getting passed. It proclaimed:

Every person who shall, by his act or neglect, maliciously kill, maim, wound, injure, torture, or cruelly beat any horse, mule, ox, cattle, sheep, or other animal, belonging to himself or another, shall, upon conviction, be adjudged guilty of a misdemeanor.

The law required adjustments, secured in 1867: Bergh saw the need soon after the passage of the 1866 Act to address the abandonment of work animals; to apply the protective legislation to “any living creature” (such as dogs and cats), not just commercially valuable ones; to broaden the list of illegal acts to include a new section making animal fighting illegal as well as the ownership and keeping of fighting animals; to cease requiring acts to be “malicious” (thereby shifting the focus from the perspective of the person to evidence of what happened to the animal); and, among other provisions, to add a remarkable section that specifically provided A.S.P.C.A. representatives with the power to arrest violators of the law.

With Bergh’s New York law of 1867, note legal scholars David Favre and Vivien Tsang in their *Detroit Law Review* study of 19th century anti-cruelty laws, “an ethical concern for the plight of animals was transformed for the first time into comprehensive legislation.” It became *the model for anti-cruelty laws* (criminal laws and chartered state Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) *adopted across the nation*.

Bergh soon became known in the New York press as “The Great Meddler” for his intervention in various acts of animal cruelty in the state. And even though his legal powers applied only in New York, he could not resist agitating on behalf of animals in New Jersey. Animal advocates here were just as eager to solicit his aid after reading about his accomplishments. Within months of establishing the country’s first humane society, Bergh received reports on animal cruelty in Hoboken. “A German lady, Mrs. Antoinette Otto,” who became a “Patroness” of the S.P.C.A., wrote: “Would to Heaven that such a Society as yours existed in the State of New Jersey,” because:

*Here in Hoboken the cruelty to animals—especially to that noble animal the horse—is outrageous—starved to skeletons—covered with sores from the blows of their inhuman drivers; they are forced, beyond their strength, to pull their heavy loads, on loose ground, and up steep hills. Some of these poor horses have wealthy owners; yet during the winter, numbers of broken-down creatures are turned out on the meadows to die a cruel and lingering death, by freezing and hunger!*¹⁵

The perpetrators of such acts, she believed “to be in the employ of Mr. E.A. Stevens,” a member of Hoboken’s founding family (whose bequest later helped establish Stevens Institute of Technology.) Mrs. Otto suggested “a ‘reminder’ of that fact from you will certainly have a most salutary effect—for Mr. Stevens cannot possibly be aware of the inhumanity of his employees.” Bergh wrote Edwin A. Stevens that same day, citing in his December 7, 1866, missive “an extract from a letter just received from a person of high respectability residing at Hoboken” and implored Stevens to found a New Jersey branch of the humane association “and earn the blessings and applause of your fellow-countrymen.” (Each chapter of the S.P.C.A. is distinct as states make their own animal protection laws.) But Stevens, in his dotage (he was then 71 and died two years later) did not sign on for this mission and there is no record of a reply to Bergh’s request.

Henry Bergh peppered New Jersey state legislators’ mail with copies of the New York S.P.C.A. charter, by-laws and other aids he thought might be useful in forming a Garden State society with protective legislation. And he used the Hudson County press to promote public outrage over local abuses, including this 1868 letter to the editor of the *Jersey City Evening Journal*, objecting to the abandonment of a horse “made to draw nine tons of coal from Hoboken to Jersey City”:

The facts, as near as I can get them are these—On Saturday [April 11] the horse... while struggling beneath the last load, which the poor beast had done his best to transport for the benefit of his unfeeling master, fell where he now lies, in the vain effort to go further. The driver, ignoring the right of the animal to fall and die, until he had done with him, beat him with his whip,

but finding that this did not revive the abused creature, seized his cart rung and pounded away, but with no better success. For it was nature and not the animal that refused to go further. Seeing that all he did in the way of torture could not impart to his prostrate servant the power of going further, he took off the harness, removed the cart and left him to perish in the bitter snow storms, which you are aware, continued at intervals during Saturday and Sunday; and at 9 o'clock this Monday morning he was still there where he fell, pawing the ground, and groaning with agony, without food or shelter – and not even a friendly hand willing or with power to end his sufferings.

Bergh had given a letter to an intermediary to hand to the Captain of Police of Jersey City. The animal advocate said he had politely asked the Captain to “relieve the poor beast in some way—by death, if past recovery,” but the policeman refused to do anything. He threw the letter back at Bergh’s colleague “with language of the most abusive character.” The problem, Bergh pointed out with bitterness, was that “...the animal in question was *insured*—hence, although disabled past recovery no one will terminate his sufferings, because of the miserable money involved.”¹⁶ Letters to the Livestock Insurance Company in Hartford, Connecticut, were soon issued by the indefatigable A.S.P.C.A. founder, but without immediate result.

Bergh’s anti-cruelty arguments—especially those on behalf of the horse—did find vigorous support among editorial writers for the Hoboken-based *Hudson County Daily Democrat*. Referring to New Jersey’s first round of legislation to incorporate a New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals—modeled after New York’s laws and passed in April 1868 with multiple amendments to follow—writers for the *Daily Democrat* called for “animal abusers [to] be arrested and made an example of,” questioned why nearly starving horses and mules were made to work in the city and pointed out that overloaded teams from New York City daily struggled on Washington and Hudson Streets. “Many of the horses attached to dirt wagons, employed on the improvements in the vicinity should claim the attention of some ‘Berghite,’” one news item concluded.¹⁷

A Hudson County branch of the S.P.C.A. formed in 1873, though little is known about its activities. But a report of the New Jersey Society about its formative years indicates that anti-cruelty activists in the state were often

focused as much on the moral state of humans who abused animals as the suffering of “dumb” (a then common term for “speechless”) animals. As a New Jersey S.P.C.A. member reported on the foundation of the society:

The better part of the community have not been slow to perceive that the humane intentions of the Society fully carried out, tend not only to prevent the infliction of cruelty on brute creation, but also to curb such vicious propensities and ferocious instincts in other directions, as are frequently exhibited among the lower orders of Society.... It is indeed self-evident, that the practice of strict humanity toward the inferior members of God's great living family on the part of one who has hitherto been cruel in his treatment of them, is a most important step in the purification and refinement of his own character.

Like their New York counterparts, each member of the New Jersey Society who wore a badge was “legally permitted within his own district to exercise supervision over the natural rights of our dumb animals and [was] empowered to cause the arrest of all perpetrators of inhuman acts;” the New Jersey S.P.C.A. claimed its members had accomplished “an improvement in the condition of horses on our horse rail roads, canals and public highways,” though without the persistence of Society representatives, they conceded, many cases were dismissed with a reprimand or word of caution, and no penalty was inflicted. Although certain animal-related laws of the period—requirements that clean water be publicly available for horses, for example—have become less relevant in the century since their passage, and many aspects of animal welfare have been improved into the 21st century, animal law scholars note that the legal relationship of humans and animals, established in the 1860s and 1870s by Bergh and his colleagues, remains the legal base today. Laws regarding children and married couples, for example, have fundamentally changed since the 19th century—a reflection of societal changes and shifts in perception—but the laws regarding animals have not similarly advanced. They are still property and “the legal system has shown itself to be loath to penalize a person for the way in which he uses his property.”¹⁸

From Carriage-Makers to Car Mechanics: The Kostelecky Family of Bloomfield Street

The lives of city horses may have been *most* changed by technological innovations introduced at the turn of the last century. Electricity was available in Hoboken from 1886, when the city's chief engineer turned a switch at the local electric plant. The advent of electric power, along with the introduc-



tion of the combustion engine, dramatically altered city life, including an increasing withdrawal of horses from the urban workforce. With this withdrawal came the waning and eventual disappearance of entire professions associated with equines, including carriage-, harness- and saddle-makers; carriage-painters; coachmen; horse-shoers; livery keepers and wheelwrights. Although some historians cite the 1890s craze for bicycles as the beginning of the

decline in livery stables—about 1 million bicycles were in use in the U.S. by 1893 and Hoboken, like most cities and towns, had a track for “velocipedes” during that period—in this city, at least, the introduction of the automobile brought the most dramatic changes to residents.¹⁹

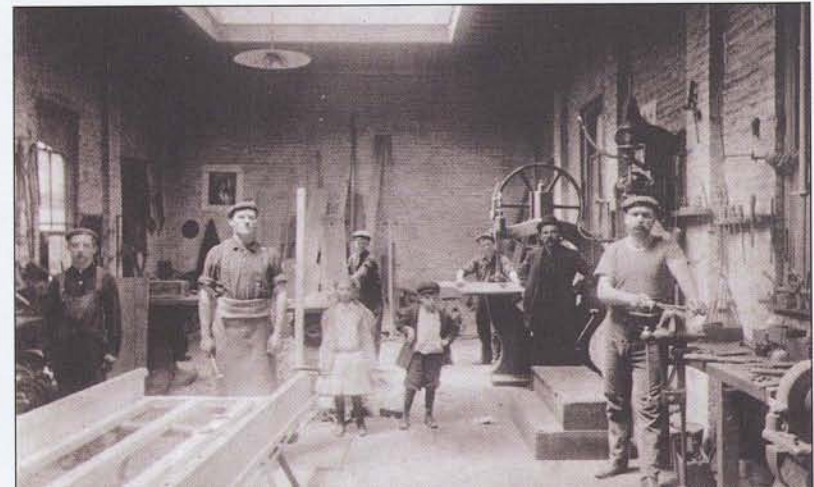
The 100-year history of the Kosteleckys’ family business on Bloomfield Street—from carriage-makers to car mechanics—indicates the impact of technological innovations on Hoboken humans and horses, and shows how such innovations initiated vocational transformations.²⁰ Born in Czechoslovakia in 1863, Joseph Kostelecky trained as a blacksmith’s apprentice before emigrating to America and settling in Manhattan. There he gained experience as a

carriage-maker. By the 1880s he had moved to Hoboken with his new skills, taking over the business of a retiring carriage and wagon manufacturer at 224 Bloomfield Street. Over the course of his 76 years, he would marry twice—his first wife, Josephine, died in 1897—and father nine children, eight of whom would survive into adulthood. Three of his four sons would work in the family business, refitting the shop and their skills over the years.

Kostelecky next purchased the 218 Bloomfield Street property, which he razed to the ground so he could build a ground-floor shop with a dwelling above. Two of his sons, Joseph [Jr.] and Louis, after serving in World War I, acquired 216 Bloomfield with the express intention of becoming auto mechanics—by then a potentially profitable undertaking. Until around 1911, cars were mainly considered an amusement for the well-to-do; carriage-drivers, who continued to dominate the roadways during the early years of automobile development, complained about cars because their horns and lights frightened horses on the roadways. By 1914, however, the mass production of cars was in full swing, with about 2 million vehicles in the U.S., and macadam and cement highways were proliferating to accommodate the popular new method of transportation.²¹ The Kosteleckys, who opened their auto-repair shop around 1920, maintained 216 Bloomfield as an auto-body shop and parking garage until the late 1960s.

The 218 Bloomfield property continued to serve Hoboken owners of horse-drawn carriages into the 1920s. In a circa 1921 snapshot, Joseph Kostelecky is seen making carriage beds and assembling pre-fabricated spokes. Horse-drawn cart could be seen on Hoboken streets into the 1940s.

Frederick, a son from Joseph Sr.’s second marriage (to Frances) took over the 218 Bloomfield Street shop from his father. He focused on auto repairs and detailing until the 1980s, when he took down his sign and retired, ending a century of family service to Hoboken’s horse-drawn and horseless carriages.



Above: Joseph Kostelecky, successor to Miller & Co., Painting & Trimming/Carriage & Wagon Mfr., General Blacksmithing, Hoboken Rubber Tire Works, photo circa. 1880. Kostelecky is wearing a derby. **Right:** Joseph Kostelecky making carriage bed and assembling pre-fabricated spokes, circa 1921. Both photos courtesy of Florence Quinzel and the Kostelecky family.

Society for the Prevention for Cruelty to Children

Henry Bergh not only made U.S. legal history by forwarding legislation to prevent cruelty to animals, he helped initiate legal protections for *children*, who were, during the 1860s and 1870s, subject to ill-treatment, exploitation and overwork, like the four-legged beings Bergh first sought to protect. Working with attorney Elbridge Gerry and with the support of philanthropist John D. Wright, he put forward a proposal to found and organize the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC), the world's first child protection agency. Incorporated in 1875 with Wright as its first president, the NYSPCC's creation followed revelations to Bergh a year earlier by church-worker Etta Wheeler that an orphan girl named Mary Ellen was being viciously flogged, gashed with scissors and starved by the family with whom she lived in the "Hell's Kitchen" section of Manhattan. During that period, in which sixteen-hour workdays for adults and children were not uncommon, children had virtually no rights and there were few laws protecting them from maltreatment. Mrs. Wheeler tired unsuccessfully to intervene with the family and to receive police assistance; when she told one of her nieces about her thwarted attempts to help the girl, the younger woman is said to have replied, "Why don't you go to Mr. Bergh? She is a little animal, surely."²²

At Bergh's request, Gerry, after cleverly securing legal standing through "an obscure section of *habeas corpus*," produced a report on Mary Ellen; her case was swiftly investigated, papers filed, the girl was removed to safety and a criminal prosecution prepared.²³ Journalist and photographer Jacob Riis, advocate for child labor laws and author of *How the Other Half Lives*, wrote about Mary Ellen's emaciated and welt-covered body when she appeared before a New York Supreme Court judge:

I saw a child brought in, carried in a horse blanket, at the sight of which men wept aloud.... [Mrs. Wheeler had] sought the great friend of dumb brutes, who made a way [to help the girl.] "The child is an animal," he said. "If there is no justice for it as a human being, it shall at least have the rights of the cur in the street. It shall not be abused."

And as I looked, I knew I was where the first chapter of the children's rights was being written under the warrant of that made for the dog; for from that dingy court-room...came forth the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, with all it has meant to the world's life.

Mary Ellen was placed with kind caretakers, married, reared her own children and died in 1956 at the age of 92. The NYSPCC continued to pioneer the rights of children; its earliest work was focused on prosecuting abusers and it advocated and secured new laws to prevent harm to children. As the NYSPCC's 125th anniversary report stated in 2000 with some pride: "Almost the entire body of modern child protective legislation is rooted in laws advocated by the NYSPCC."

Fire and Police Department Horses and Dogs

Hoboken Fire and Police Department horses and dogs have their own histories, some of which have been included in two city museums established by these departments during the late 20th century.

The organization of both the Hoboken Fire Department (in 1847 as the Hoboken Village Volunteer Fire Department) and the Hoboken Police Department (in 1851) predate the 1855 incorporation of the city. Both departments expanded as Hoboken's population grew, and over their more than 150 years of service they have trained both horses and dogs, as needed, to perform tasks as co-workers. A photograph from the Hoboken Fire Department Museum shows circa 1878 steam fire-engine pumpers with



Above: Steamer pumper drawn by two horses, circa 1878. Donated by John Reilly to the Hoboken Fire Department Museum, courtesy of the Hoboken Fire Department Museum.



horses hitched two abreast; fire horses drew the apparatus of the department until 1916. The Hoboken Police Department included horses in its workforce until 1949, when it auctioned off the last thirteen; in 2003, three horses were delivered to Hoboken to re-establish the city's mounted police unit, the only one in the county.²⁴

Working dogs have captured the affection of ordinarily stoic 20th-century firefighters. The Hoboken Fire Department framed a photograph of their fire dog, Lucky, in 1948, when she had puppies. Thirty years later, members of Hoboken's Engine Co. 5 would show their devotion to Taps, a 15-year-old Dalmatian/Pointer mix, by burying him beneath the statue of a volunteer fireman in Church Square Park. Although Taps was sometimes active in fire rescues—he had saved a child's life by finding him in the bathroom of a burning building—he was equally beloved as a mascot who had been with the engine company since he was four weeks old. The *Jersey Journal* described veteran firefighters weeping when Taps was euthanized at a Jersey City animal clinic after a diagnosis of liver cancer; a procession of six cars with illuminated headlights returned him to the Hoboken firehouse where his pine casket was placed on the back of a pumper. "He got a real hero's funeral," said Fire Captain Edward Scharneck.²⁵

Left, top to bottom: Robin Schwartz, *Pete*, Hoboken K-9, 1993, courtesy Robin Schwartz. Police horses grazing at 15th Street, 2003, courtesy of Robert Foster. Lucky and her puppies, ca. 1948, courtesy of the Hoboken Fire Department Museum.



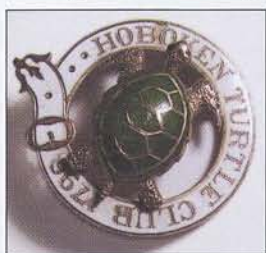
Above: Taps in a fire pumper, ca. 1970. Courtesy of the Hoboken Fire Department Museum.

Below: Headstone for Taps beneath the statue of a volunteer fireman in Church Square Park. Courtesy of McKevin Shaughnessy



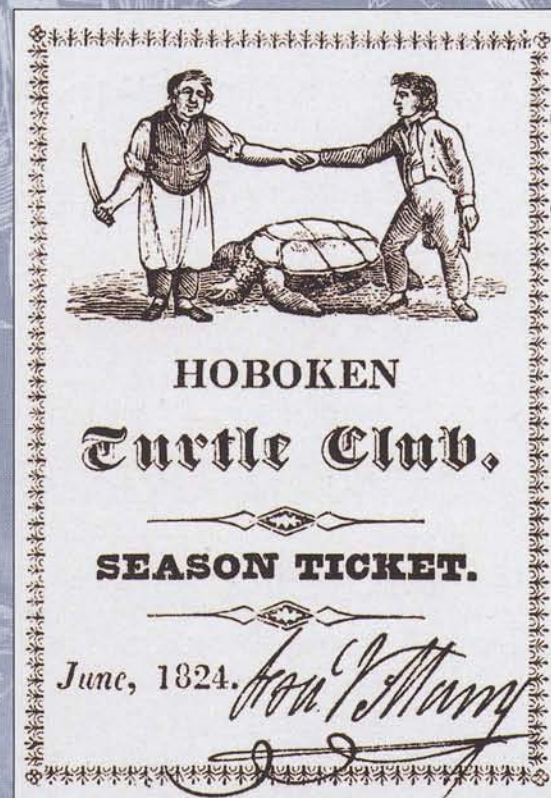


Before Colonel Stevens created the “Elysian Fields” for crowd-weary New Yorkers, pastoral Hoboken offered leisure-seeking New York gastronomes its “Turtle Grove”—“dense woods” in the northern portion of the city along the waterfront, where “the green turtle [was] served up to the “substantial citizens of New York.”¹ Writing in 1895, local historian Charles H. Winfield reckoned the association they formed, the Hoboken Turtle Club, began in the early 1800s (he was hard pressed to fix a date of organization) though a circa-1890 enamel and gold pin with the relief of a turtle, produced to commemorate the club’s founding, cites 1797 as the inaugural date. Various sources claim its earliest members included Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. A season ticket for the Club, reproduced in Winfield’s *Hopoghan Hacking. Hoboken, A Pleasure Resort for Old New York*, is dated June 1824. It celebrates the readying of a large turtle for the soup tureen with the image of a cook (wearing an apron and holding a carving knife in one hand) clasping the hand of a bon vivant over the reptile’s upended body. Although New York newspapers were already complaining in the late 1860s about the loss of “the cool shades of Hoboken” to stores and other city development, the Hoboken Turtle Club continued to serve its special soup (and perhaps other liquid delights) at least into the 1880s, as the Club grounds are depicted in an 1889 issue of *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*.²



Hoboken did more than provide turtle soup to help meet the food needs of New York City’s exploding population (mid-19th century New York hosted more than 500,000 residents.³) In the 1850s and ‘60s, New York City’s “market day” was preceded by a night of cattle-driving through the streets of Hoboken. Before refrigeration, Western livestock dealers transported live animals, intended for New York City’s vast market, via railroad to

City Animals: Food and Clothing



Inset: Gold and enamel pin, Hoboken Turtle Club, circa 1890. Courtesy of Paul Neshamkin.
In background: “Scene of the Grounds of the Hoboken Turtle Club, Punch Before Dinner,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, 1889. Courtesy Paul Neshamkin. **Right:** Hoboken Turtle Club season ticket, June 1824. Courtesy of Paul Neshamkin.

Hoboken. Ferries that went unused for human conveyance at night awaited the animals that survived the multi-state journey, to cross the North (or Hudson) River.⁴ William A. Macy, a Stevens family associate, recalled his arrival in the city in 1854, when the *Pioneer* was shuttling herds of cattle. "I well remember the first night I spent in Hoboken," he wrote.

I was awakened by the bellowing of cattle, the shouts and profanity of the drivers and the crack of their whips, as they passed along Newark Street to the ferries. At the southwest corner of Newark and River Streets was a series of pens, where the animals could be held until such time as they could be taken across the river. The old Pioneer was especially used for that purpose, and it would frequently take till noon before the work was done. Occasionally after the chains were up, but before the boat was actually unfastened, a big Texan steer would conclude he did not want to make the trip and would beat a hasty retreat, break the chains and start on a run with the whole drove at his heels, perhaps escape from the enclosure and scatter over the town; or perhaps a contrary hog would lead a herd of brothers backward... then would occur a grand scrimmage on the part of the employees to gather them in. As high as 1,800 head of all classes of stock have passed on one market day.⁵

On arrival in Manhattan, the animals would be driven east through the city streets to pens and slaughterhouses. The April 28, 1866, edition of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* describes a brutal and filthy scene, with cattle drivers beating animals "until their eyes are filled with bloodshot and madness," and thousands of cows, swine, and sheep kicking up dust and frightening pedestrians as they were driven from the Hoboken Ferry into the streets.

No records on the number of animals kept or butchered in Hoboken during this period are available—though newspaper reports refer unblinkingly to residents' pigs running in the streets and goats rummaging through gardens—but prior to refrigeration, backyard and "small communal slaughterhouses" were common and the 1850 Federal Census does list 15 butchers or butcher's apprentices in Hoboken.⁶ (The goats, however, were most likely raised for milk. As one man responded to the complaint about his goat eating a neighbor's flowers: "A pint of goat's milk is worth all the flowers in Hoboken.") Jersey City's abattoirs, near Hoboken's western border, came to concern Fourth Ward residents, who regularly wrote letters to the *Hudson County Daily Democrat* during the summer of 1869 to complain about sewer drains in the adjacent Meadows "black with slaughter-house blood."⁷



"Cattle driving in the streets—Who cares for old women and children?" *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 28 April 1866. Library of Congress.

Hoboken's Board of Health was created in 1887 and its Sanitary Code passed in 1891, empowering the Board "to prevent the adulteration of food and drink, and the sale of unwholesome food; to define and declare nuisances; to use all means to prevent the spread of contagious diseases; to regulate, control, or prohibit the keeping of all kinds of animals, and to remove all kinds of nuisances detrimental to health; to compile sanitary statistics, births, deaths, and marriage; to control and regulate the sanitary conditions of tenement houses, and other buildings, public or private." Two years later the State of New Jersey mandated the routine inspection of animals to be used for food, as well as their living quarters. Local boards of health were required to have a veterinarian inspect cattle when board members believed a contagious disease was present, and if the vet declared the meat or milk of any animal unfit, the State Board of Health and Dairy Commissioner could prohibit its consumption.

City residents had reason to be concerned about the possible animal-to-human transmission of anthrax, rabies, glanders and diphtheria (among others) through contact or through the ingestion of milk or meat. In 1885, the first veterinarian employed by the State of New Jersey urged the legislature to pass laws requiring sanitary milk production because of the possible—and later confirmed—danger of transmission of tuberculosis from cows to humans. And the very availability of meat and milk was often threatened with major U.S. outbreaks of diseases such as “hoof and mouth” in 1870, 1880, 1884, 1902, 1903 and 1908. The disease was feared less for its impact on humans—the Department of Agriculture told reporters it “caused considerable discomfort” in people—than the speed with which it spread through cattle, hogs, sheep and goats, causing sores that made them waste away when eating and standing became impossible. A 1914 outbreak on a North Bergen, New Jersey, farm not only led to the shooting death of “every living animal” on the premises (which hundreds of spectators watched from a hilltop overlooking the farm), it caused railcars packed with poultry to be halted at the Lackawanna yards in Hoboken; prevented the transport of cattle, sheep and swine on Hudson County highways without a permit; and brought about the inspection of all dairies in the county and the quarantining of a Hoboken resident, Joseph Farrara of Madison Street, whose farm in Secaucus was found to have infected cows.⁸ Local dairies, such as Keystone Dairy on Bloomfield Street; responded almost daily to news reports with advertisements. “Foot & Mouth Disease Transmissible Through Milk” began Keystone’s bold-type ad in the November 14, 1914, *Hudson Dispatch*. That fact was followed by a claim by the “president of the State Board of Veterinarians” that “the perfect pasteurization of milk is the only safeguard against the spread of the disease to the human race.” Compulsory pasteurization did not become law in New Jersey until three years later, and the state was a pioneer in the certification of raw milk from sanitary producers, but Keystone’s milk, the ads assured buyers, was “the only Milk Perfectly Pasteurized in Hoboken.”⁹ Best to be safe: “For Your Own Protection, Use Keystone Dairy Co.’s Perfectly Pasteurized Milk.”

Although no milk or meat was *produced* in Hoboken after 1912 (a condition which a *Sanitary Survey* of the period said put the city “at the mercy of her neighbors”) chickens continued to be raised, in backyards or in coops behind tenements.¹⁰ A local publication had declared only a few years before, at the close of the 19th century, that Hoboken had hosted “one of the most complete poultry houses in the State,” built by German-born John N. Crusius adjacent to his lavish home on Tenth and Hudson Streets. Situated on “handsome grounds... artistically set with flowers

FANCIERS' GAZETTE

OUR FIELD: THE NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST.

VOL. II. INDIANAPOLIS, IND., MARCH, 1884. NO. 1.



DARK BRAHMAS, OWNED BY CHAS. RULE, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

This magnificent variety of fowls does not at present enjoy the popularity they justly deserve, although there is a tendency on the part of some breeders to adopt them again. The desire of people to try everything new is, perhaps, the cause for their decline, for in fact, they possess intrinsic merits which have always been recognized. By the present *Standard*, so far as it relates to their shape, it is identical with that of Light Brahmas, save in the tail of hens, which are required to be “almost hidden with the rump feathers.” Their color has always been quite difficult to obtain, and which only well-bred families could well maintain. The ground-color of the plumage of the hens is now described as “greyish white.” What difference is there between “greyish white” and “steel grey,” if any?

Dark Brahams featured in *Fancier's Gazette*, March 1884, an upstart publication for “thoroughbred poultry culture.” Hoboken Historical Museum collection.



Above: Feeding chickens at 509 Jefferson Street, June 1924. Courtesy of the Tatulli family.

and shrubbery," Mr. Crusius's hen-house was intended for the breeding of "fine poultry."¹¹ By the early 20th century, however, chickens were raised in Hudson County primarily for their eggs, not for show. Ads in the *Jersey Journal* during 1912 offered poultry feed; area residents raised baby chicks ("strong, husky fellows," claims one ad) and sold them, while others offered laying pullets and hatching eggs alongside advertisements for canaries, bicycles, automobiles, wagons and "\$5 for horses dead or alive." Fresh eggs continued to supplement the diet of Hoboken families at least into the 1920s: A photograph from June 1924 shows a member of the Tatulli family feeding chickens in front of her house at 509 Jefferson Street.

Live chicken markets also served Hoboken residents throughout the 20th century, with the ethnic background of owners and clientele changing over

Below: Caged chickens waiting to be moved into the former Midtown Live Poultry Market on Fifth Street, 1983. Photos by Bruce Tamberelli. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.



time, reflecting new waves of arrivals. By 1931, Italians had superseded Germans as Hoboken's leading foreign-born population; just a few years before, in the 1926 Hoboken directory, fully half of those listed as owners of poultry markets had Italian-American surnames. Within 50 years, Hoboken's live poultry and egg markets were serving a largely Latino clientele, as residents with Latino heritage—notably families from Puerto Rico who were drawn to the city because of jobs in garment factories and the Tootsie Roll plant—comprised over 40 percent of the city's population by the early 1970s. Three live poultry and fresh egg markets maintained a brisk business, also offering live rabbits for sale.

The number of Latinos in Hoboken has since nearly halved, following the city's real estate development booms of the late 1980s and 1990s, which facilitated the displacement or relocation of many tenants with lower rents. The cost of commercial rentals also rose, changing the businesses represented on Hoboken's main streets; as of this writing, one *polleria* remains in the city, close to the Hoboken Housing Authority's largest public housing complex.¹²

Animals as Adornment

M.H. Dunlop, historian of New York City's Gilded Age, remarks that the human use of birds and animals as décor during the 1890s was part of a trend among city dwellers: "City people liked to look at animals," she notes. They went in droves to menageries, enjoyed exhibitions of paintings and sculptures of animals and considered the height of fashion furs trimmed with tails, heads and paws; lizards made into jewelry; and hats and neck ruches decorated with whole stuffed birds. "Bird décor" especially, Dunlop writes, "was at its zenith" during the 1890s. In 1896, naturalist Frank M. Chapman (who later became curator of birds at the American Museum of Natural History) listed the birds he saw on women's hats while on two afternoon walks on 14th Street, downtown Manhattan's busiest shopping district, which was easily accessible to Hoboken residents via ferry¹³:

Birds Seen on Women's Hats, 14th Street in Manhattan, 1896

Species	No.	Species	No.
Robin	4	Swallow-tailed Flycatcher	1
Brown Thrasher	1	Kingbird	1
Bluebird	3	Kingfisher	1
Blackburnian Warbler	1	Pileated Woodpecker	1
Blackpoll Warbler	3	Red-headed Woodpecker	2
Wilson's Warbler	3	Flicker	23
Scarlet Tanager	3	Saw-whet Owl	1
Tree Swallow	1	Mourning Dove	1
Bohemian Waxwing	1	Prairie Hen	1
Cedar Waxwing	23	Ruffed Grouse	2
Northern Shrike	1	Bob-white	16
Pine Grosbeak	1	California Valley Quail	2
Snow Bunting	15	Sanderling	5
Tree Sparrow	2	Greater Yellowlegs	1
White-throated Sparrow	1	Green Heron	1
Bobolink	1	Virginia Rail	1
Meadowlark	2	Laughing Gull	1
Baltimore Oriole	9	Common Tern	21
Purple Grackle	5	Black Tern	1
Blue Jay	5	Grebe	7

City Animals: Spectacle and Sport

By the early 1900s, residents of congested Manhattan were clamoring for outdoor entertainments—as were urban dwellers across America. The first half of the 19th century saw the beginnings of the establishment of amusement parks, a revival of horse-racing and the development of spectator sports for urban masses, as the proportion of populations living in communities of more than 8,000 tripled between 1800 and 1850.¹ In Hoboken, Colonel John Stevens added amusements to Elysian Fields, including “primitive Ferris Wheels and his locomotive on a circular track.” And around 1822, two of Stevens’s sons, John Cox Stevens (known as the family sportsman because of his interests in horseracing and yachting) and Robert Livingston Stevens (known as an inventor and transportation entrepreneur) attempted to gain support from the New Jersey State Legislature

“for the regulation of a course for trials of speed on the island of Hoboken.” (Although the Stevens family had begun draining and filling the lowlands as early as 1804, Hoboken was still an island during the 1820s, with regular flooding of its western meadows.²) Printed broadsides from the Stevens brothers and a Legislative Committee organized to consider their proposal argue that a course on the Stevens land for training horses and conducting races would benefit horse-breeding in the State of New Jersey and that “trials of speed are not necessarily connected with vice and immorality.”³ The law at the time, which prohibited “a man from trying the speed of his own colt, upon his own ground, in the presence of more than ten people...when there is neither rioting nor gambling [was] so severe and so repugnant to the feelings of people generally,” the brothers argued, that should anyone be found violating this law, “a jury [could] scarcely be found willing to punish them.” The Legislative Committee seemed most impressed that the State of New Jersey could receive the benefits of horseracing already enjoyed by the State of New York, including “large sums expended by the numbers that attend such regulated meetings from all parts of the Union.” This perceived benefit, however, was not sufficient to overwhelm legislators’ negative views of gambling and the undesirable behaviors associated with it, and the 1811 “Act to Prevent Horse-Racing” remained in force.



According to Barnum’s autobiography, this drawing of “wild buffaloes pursued by Indians on horseback” illustrated advertisements for the Grand Buffalo Hunt. From *The Life of P.T. Barnum*, 1855. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

P.T. Barnum

Barnum Comes to Hoboken

Most sporting events of the early 19th century, notes historian Foster Rhea Dulles in *America Learns to Play*, “were professional affairs, put on...for profit.”⁴ That was certainly true of the event brought to Hoboken on August 31, 1843. On that day, the Stevens family welcomed to Hoboken budding master showman P.T. Barnum, later to be known for his remarkable circus. In return for a percentage of the ferry receipts for the day, Barnum presented his free “Buffalo Hunt and Western Sports Spectacle” within “a few rods of the Hoboken Ferry.”⁵ The Barnum spectacle drew to Hoboken’s Elysian Fields 24,000 visitors to watch three performances, heralded in newspapers, handbills and posters as a daring display by rider C.D. French of “throwing the lasso, by which the animals were captured in their most wild and untamed state. Every man, woman and child can here witness *the wild sports of the Western Prairie*,” Barnum’s handbills proclaimed, and to better insinuate the daring display and wildness of the buffalo, the advertisements included a declaration that “double railing has been put around the whole course, to prevent the possibility of the Buffaloes approaching the multitude.”

But Barnum had purchased fifteen very young and feeble buffalo calves; his display, he readily conceded, was one of his “humbugs,” or hoaxes, albeit one provided free of charge. “The assurance that no danger need be apprehended from the buffaloes was simply ridiculous,” he admitted in his autobiography. “The poor creatures were so weak and tame that it was doubtful whether they would run at all.”

When the day of the spectacle arrived, and after the City Brass Band had done “its best to amuse the immense crowd until three o’clock,” the frightened young buffalo calves were released from a shed. Although taunted by French (who was dressed in a buckskin costume and whose face was painted “like an Indian”) the buffalo refused to move, causing great laughter among the crowd. The “multitude swinging their hats and hallooing in wild disorder” caused the buffalo to suddenly break into a gallop, according to Barnum, and they tumbled over a low portion of the fence, alarming the spectators,



The Grand Buffalo Hunt, from Barnum’s 1855 autobiography.

who ran in all directions. The showman claimed the animals “were as badly frightened as the people” and hid in a “neighboring swamp.” Only one buffalo could be captured by French’s lasso and the rider spent the rest of the afternoon demonstrating his skills on horses.

Other reports of the Barnum Buffalo Hunt—in local newspapers—are more dramatic, making one wonder about the many custodians required in the care and feeding of humbugs. Nearly 125 years after the event, the *Jersey Journal* reprinted this account:

Seconds later the wooden fence enclosing the track disappeared under the pounding hooves... Picnickers hundreds of yards away suddenly had their pickles and potato salad trampled by wild buffaloes. Near the ferry slip some patrons were having a quiet beer at the outdoor stand when some of the animals showed up. There was a mad rush for the safety of a nearby ferryboat...

Some of the animals got as far as City Hall, where the constables on duty fired a few aimless shots before retiring to the safety of the building. By the time the dust had cleared, night had fallen, and an enterprising butcher at Second and Bloomfield Streets sold buffalo steaks to some of his special customers for the next two weeks.

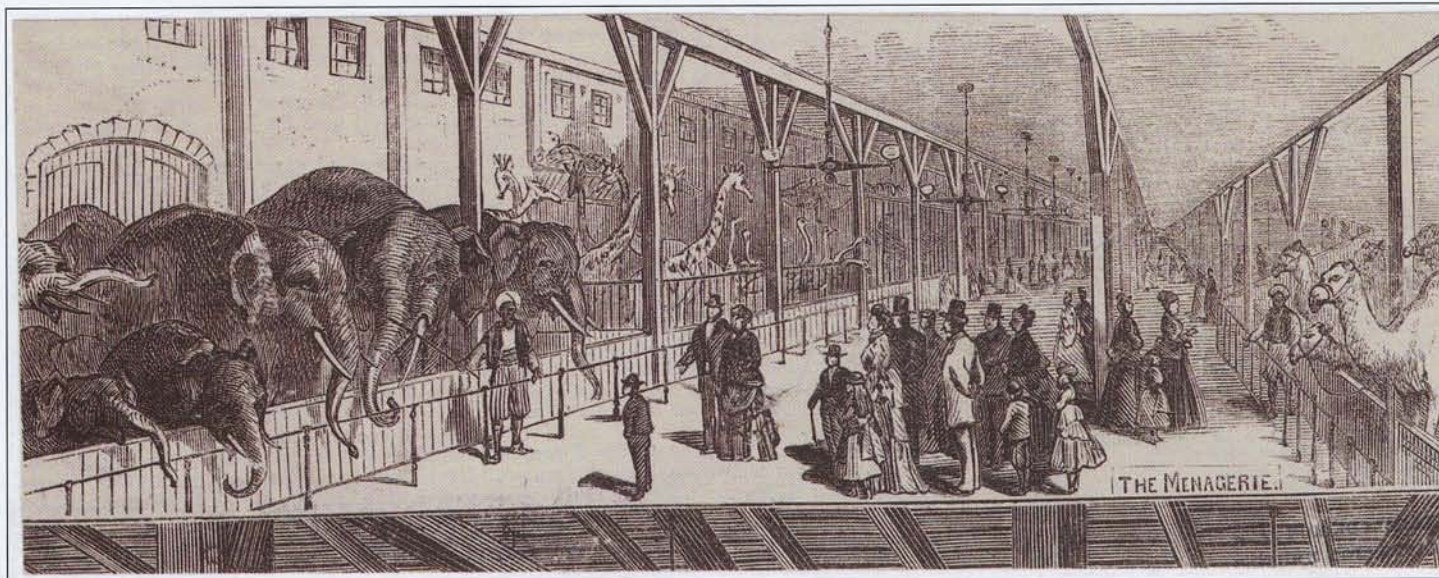
The Hoboken Buffalo Hunt was a “sideshow” or “temporary enterprise” for Barnum, who had, two years earlier, bought the contents of Scudder’s American Museum in New York City and begun to exhibit inanimate curiosities from around the globe, along with “industrious fleas, educated dogs, jugglers, automatons, ventriloquists [...] gypsies, albinos, fat boys, giants, dwarfs [...] cameleopards, a rhinoceros, grisly bears, orang-outangs, great serpents....”⁶ In fact, the feeding of live animals to snakes as part of the display at Barnum’s second American Museum initiated his first run-in with A.S.P.C.A. founder Henry Bergh, whose legislative successes in New York prompted Barnum to bring his snakes to Hoboken via the ferry so they could, according to a letter written by Bergh, “feed on live animals in defiance of the

laws of humanity and the lynx-eyed zeal of this Society.” Barnum published a letter from a prominent naturalist who asserted that boa constrictors must consume live prey in order to survive, but the A.S.P.C.A. continued to keep a close watch on Barnum’s activities at his menagerie, calling him to task for other infractions. Eventually these “friendly antagonists” called a truce; Barnum became an A.S.P.C.A. supporter and even attended Bergh’s funeral in 1888.

Barnum’s menageries were followed by his now-famous circus ventures, which he and various partners developed into enormous and enormously profitable business enterprises; with the growth after the Civil War of the trans-continental railroad, this “traveling amusement” could span the nation, offering popular entertainment to what had once been separate regions of the United States. Although little menageries and bands had been



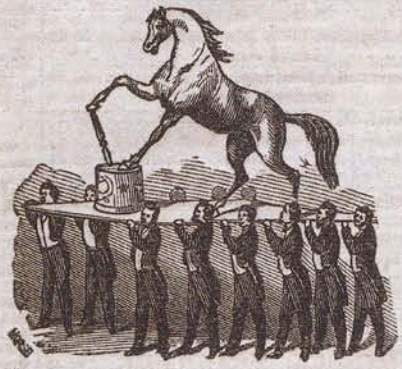
traveling to American taverns since Colonial times, and cities—including Hoboken—had hosted sophisticated equestrian multi-ring exhibitions (see the history of Hexamer’s Riding Academy on page 41), circuses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries could literally stop traffic when they pulled into cities with as many as fifty rail cars.⁷ As a transportation hub across the river from New York City—Hoboken had rail lines, ferries and by 1863, the great German trans-Atlantic steamship companies, Hamburg-American and North German Lloyd, located on its riverfront—the Mile Square City



Above: “The Menagerie,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Monthly*, 1869. Picture Collection, The Branch Libraries, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Inset: Portrait of P.T. Barnum from *The Life of P.T. Barnum, Written by Himself*, 1855. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

NEW YORK CIRCUS.
 From the Hippodrome Iron Buildings, Fourteenth street, opposite the Academy of Music, New York.
 L. B. LENT.....DIRECTOR



WILL EXHIBIT
AT HOBOKEN,
 ON THE PUBLIC SQUARE;
 FORMERLY
 CHURCH SQUARE,
SATURDAY, MAY 29.

THIS CELEBRATED TROUPE
 Which is permanently established in a splendid iron edifice on Fourteenth street, in the City of New York, will occupy the usual summer vacation, during which the building is closed, with a
GRAND EXCURSION BY RAILWAY
 through the country, traveling by special trains chartered for the purpose, with the intention of giving the inhabitants of other cities and towns opportunities of witnessing a carefully selected programme of those
BRILLIANT, EXCITING AND ELEGANT EQUESTRIAN ENTERTAINMENTS
 which for years have proved one of the most popular and successful features of the public amusements of New York. To those who have ever witnessed the performances of this troupe, either at the Hippodrome Buildings in New York or during its former summer excursions, it is only necessary to say that
 this year
NEW ARTISTS, NEW FEATURES, AND NEW ATTRACTIONS
 combine to render its resources for the production of novelty
GREATER THAN EVER BEFORE,
 and that it is confidently believed that in all respects the performances to be given the present season will be found, not only superior to anything of the kind hitherto witnessed in America, but positively
UNEQUALED IN ANY COUNTRY.

N. B.—As the New York Circus travels entirely by railroad, no attempt is made at outside show, the management relying for patronage upon the legitimate attractions of the exhibition, and not upon long processions of baggage, horses and wagons in the public streets. **NO CATCHPENNY SIDE SHOWS** are allowed with this establishment.

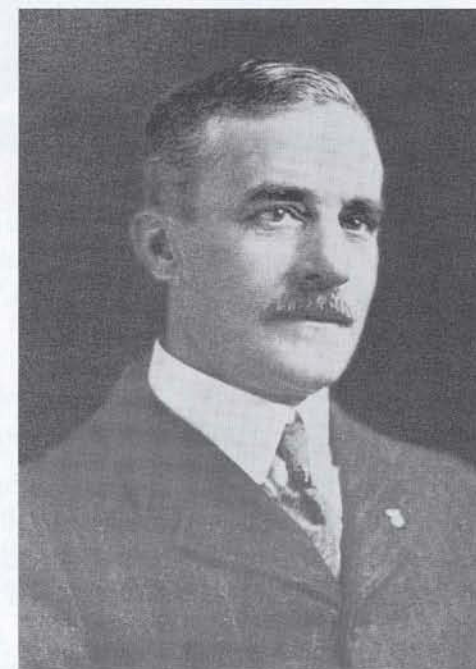
Admission.....50 Cents | Children under ten, 25 Cts.
 No Standing Room. Seats for All. Doors open at 2 and 7. Grand Entrance at 2½ and 7½ P. M.
 my22-6t C. W. FULLER, Agent.

was regularly treated to a form of "Circus Day," during which circus animals were unloaded from multiple rail cars or ships, sometimes in preparation for the next leg of their journey. On Circus Day, explains circus historian Janet M. Davis, factories might shut down, schools let out, and shops close their doors so that all could see the circus people and animals. "That Elephant—the monster elephant 'Androo' which arrived by the steamer *Holsatia* on Tuesday last was out for exercise last night on Washington Street," exclaimed the *Hudson County Daily Democrat* on June 4, 1869. "A large crowd was attracted to the spot, who gazed with wonder on the mammoth proportions of this huge beast." That night Androo was ferried to New York City, to join French's Great Egyptian Caravan & Circus in Central Park. It was no accident that he had arrived on a German vessel—the *Holsatia* was launched by the Hamburg-American Line—as zoological gardens and circuses were mostly supplied by German firms in the second half of the 19th century.

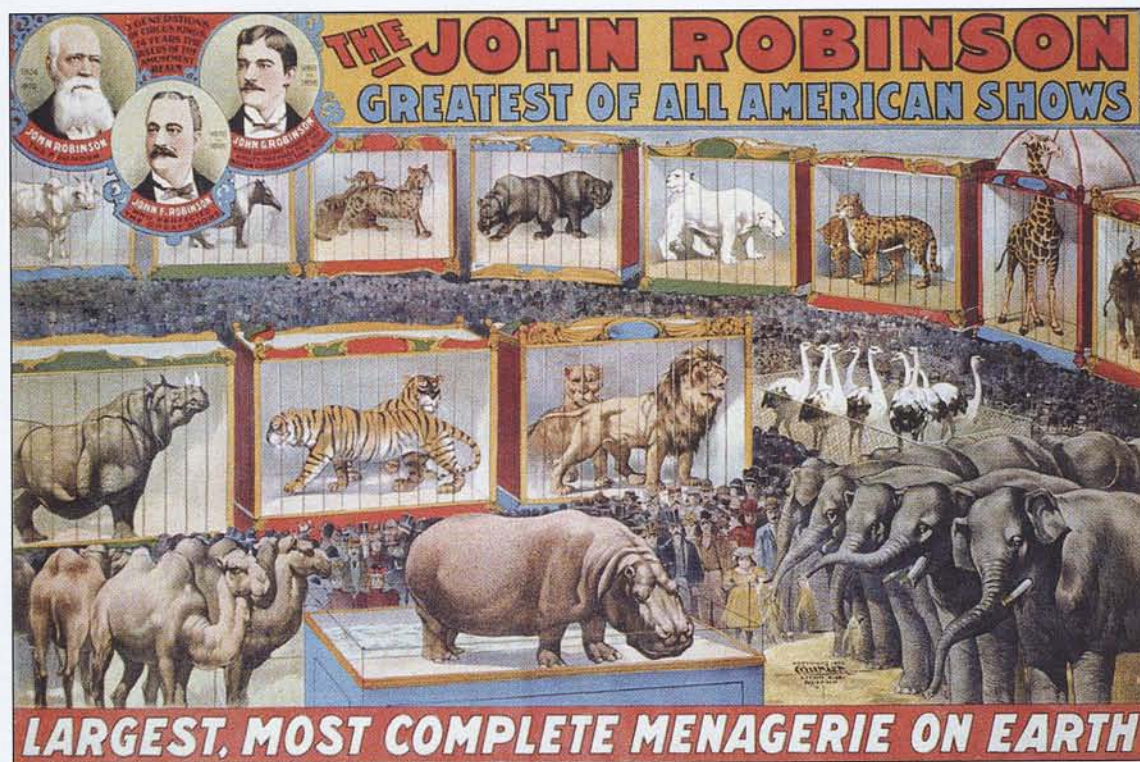
Circus performers also came expressly to Hoboken to entertain its residents. A month before the *Holsatia* brought Androo to Hoboken, the *Daily Democrat* had heralded the arrival via ferry of Lent's Celebrated Equestrian Company "which has been performing with much success at the 14th Street Circus in New York," and which was offering a one-day only "exhibit on the public square." The paper also announced the coming performance at Hoboken's Odd Fellows Hall of midget couple General Tom Thumb (Charles Stratton) and Lavinia Warren; promotion by P.T. Barnum had made them celebrities.⁸

Left: Advertisement for Lent's equestrian company in the *Hudson County Daily Democrat*, May 22, 1869. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

Sometimes circus performers—human or animal—made headlines when the companies' carefully orchestrated activities went awry, and threats of danger and potential death, always an undercurrent in their shows, became reality. On March 31, 1913, the front pages of the *New York Times*, *Hudson Dispatch* and *Jersey Journal* reported the startling death in Hoboken of an elephant from the John Robinson Military Circus.⁹ Five elephants, after performing stunts during a week-long engagement on 14th Street in New York City (including the firing of cannons and miming rescues), were transported just before midnight by ferry to Hoboken. Third-generation Robinson Circus owner John G. Robinson was working with his trainers to bring the elephants to rail-



Above: John G. Robinson. From *Give 'Em A John Robinson, A Documentary on the Old John Robinson Circus*.



Poster, showing Lizzie and other elephants in the John Robinson Circus. "The John Robinson, Largest, Most Complete Menagerie on Earth," Courier Litho Company, 1898. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

cars waiting to take them to their next venue in Cortland, New York. Lizzie, the largest of the troop, alarmed by a train roaring overhead on the elevated line, broke away from her trainer, "leaped over a low stone wall into Ferry Street" and, "trumpeting madly," began to "plunge along Washington Street to Newark Street." The streets were crowded with people returning from New York, and news reports describe women pulling their children to safety and the racing elephant overturning a heavy milk wagon. Robinson and his crew, soon accompanied by a crowd of hooting men and boys, chased Lizzie and tried in vain to capture her as she rushed down the Christopher Street slip into the ferry-house. The *Jersey Journal* account described ferry attendants attempting to stop the

elephant by beating her on the head with boat hooks, but she pushed through the iron gates and on to the ferryboat *Drummond*, which was tied up for the night.

[W]ith a mad cry the beast lumbered aboard the boat, bounded through the wagon cabin and plunged into the Hudson... For ten minutes she surged in the river, trumpeting violently and slashing the water with her trunk and feet. After a little, however, she emitted one more cry and sank to the bottom.

Robinson, who had tried with his assistants to rescue Lizzie by pulling her in with a strong rope, "sat down on the deck and cried like a baby. He had had Lizzie nearly all the twenty-five years of her life."

The following day, Lizzie's body washed ashore at Staten Island. "Rumors were flying around that a vessel has been driven ashore in the storm," the *Staten Island World* announced. "Investigation revealed the carcass of an elephant floating around in about thirty feet of water."

By evening, "fully three thousand people had gathered on the foreshore to view the body," the *Hudson Dispatch* reported, "and the police had to be called out to maintain order." Lizzie's body was to be transported to Fire Island for burial but no record of the interment has been found.¹⁰

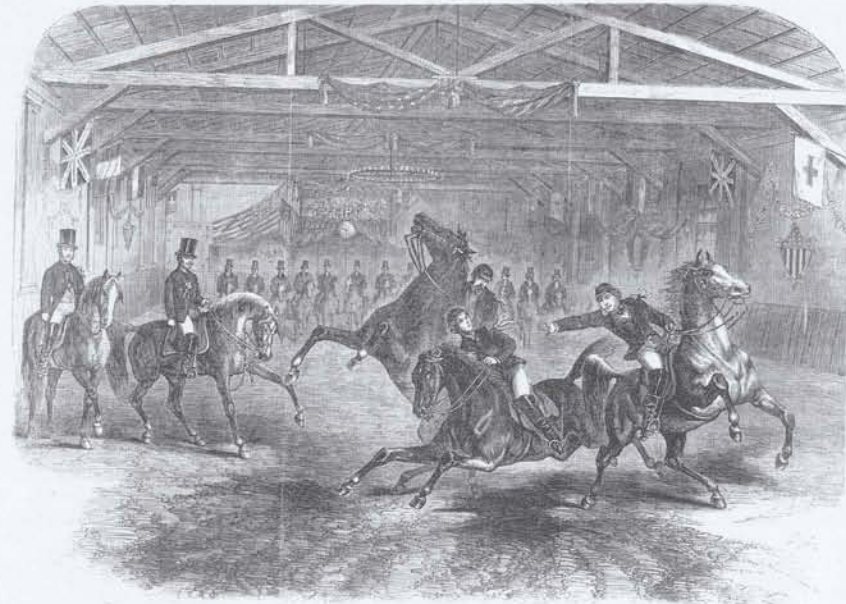
John G. Robinson remained deeply devoted to the remaining elephants in his care. Even after bankruptcy forced him in 1916 to sell most of his equipment and animals to other circuses, he kept four elephants on his Terrace Park, Ohio, property, which had always served as their winter quarters. After Robinson's death in 1921, his widow continued the practice and the elephants became an unusual fixture of the village. Local historians report "it was commonplace to see an elephant pulling a plow for a spring garden" or wandering around Terrace Park streets.¹¹

Hexamer's Riding Academy and the German Riding Club

Although the performance of equestrian events in city amphitheatres was a British invention—a retired cavalryman opened the world's first multi-ring amphitheatre in London in 1778 and one of his protégés imported the concept to America at the close of the 18th century—by the mid-19th century, displays of acrobatic riding in Hoboken, at least, were largely shaped by the city's burgeoning German population. Of the 7,000 people living in the city during that period, over 1,500 were German. The new immigrants established their own clubs, including several for *schuetzen*, or marksmen, who would parade on horseback up Washington Street on their way to shooting contests. The Hoboken Riding Club, the membership of which was made up of “the *elite* of our German society,” was organized in 1855, then reorganized as the German Riding Club in 1864.¹² Said to be the “parent



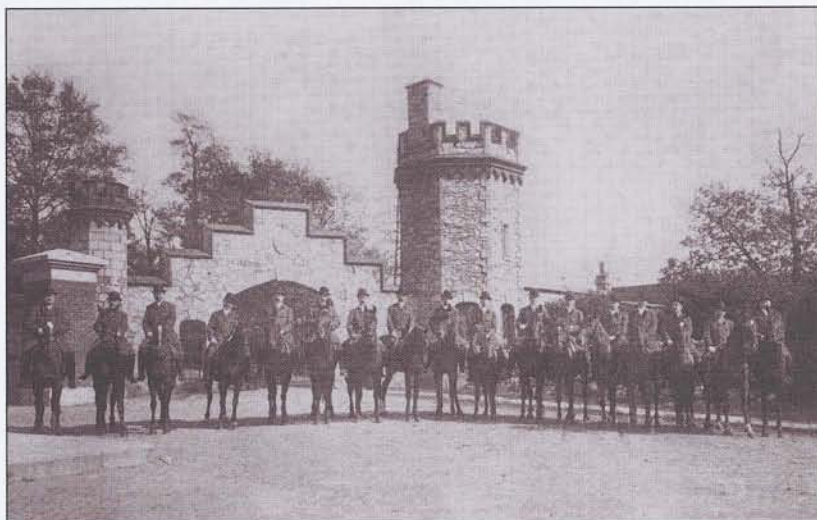
Interior view of the Hexamer's Riding Academy, ca. 1860s. Courtesy of Jim Hans.



“Jeu de Barre,” *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 1866. Library of Congress. Each gentleman (women riders were not mentioned) wore a ribbon on his left shoulder and on a given signal, two riders were to take the bow from the shoulder of the third, using only their right hand. The rider who had the bow after the two minutes allowed for the contest was declared the winner.

of all or nearly all” the riding clubs in the vicinity, the Hoboken club held its events at Hexamer's Riding Academy, founded in 1850. A boarding and livery business, Hexamer's was also a celebrated school for riders, providing training quarters for saddle-horses and a venue for exhibition rides at their Hudson Street establishment. In April 1866 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* described a Hoboken Riding Club event in which “16 members dressed in dark frock coats, white buckskin pants, and cavalier boots” demonstrated quadrilles, gallops, and hurdle-jumping, concluding with the “Jeu de Barre,” a game of skill for three riders.

Rough Riding Clubs from Hoboken and Jersey City trained at Hexamer's Academy until 1915. Dressed “like United States cavalymen,” they would canter up Hudson Street after church, “on their way to East Boulevard bridle paths,” and host seasonal “closing rides” that were social highlights for many



Hoboken Riding Club at Stevens Institute of Technology gates, circa 1904. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

Hobokenites, with riding demonstrations followed by dancing at nearby Meyer's Hotel.

Like the wagon-making Kostelecky family, the Hexamers also moved into the automotive age, though the equestrians retained their original concern, too, providing riding lessons to "some of the foremost people in the country." By the early 20th century, second-generation owner Alexander Hexamer had added the Hoboken Auto Company to his Riding Academy and horse-carriage and cab rental company. Ironically, the auto company would bring the



Hoboken Riding Academy Card, circa 1907. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

family business to ruin, as a December 1915 fire, caused by the explosion of an automobile's gasoline tank, wiped out their building, which had spanned numbers 215 through 223 on Hudson Street.¹³

While firefighters and longshoremen rescued the horses from the burn-

ing stables and fought to keep the flames from engulfing a German ocean liner docked at the North German Lloyd pier a block away, residents of neighboring buildings told *Hudson Dispatch* reporters they feared that wild circus animals, which were known to be boarded at Hexamer's during winter months, would be released into the streets. "In the basement of the big building were kept a number of cages containing lions, tigers and other animals. The report spread that a large number of beasts were stored there this winter and this created a panic in the neighborhood," the *Jersey Journal* stated. "The fear of the nearby residents over the fate of wild animals proved useless. There were none in the building. Mr. Hexamer said last night, however, that up until a few weeks ago a South American circus man had two truck horses, some dogs, and two elephants in the building."

Alexander Hexamer established temporary headquarters in Naegeli's Hotel at Third and Hudson Streets, and announced to the press that he would renovate the riding academy. But both the fire and the ascent of the automobile ensured that the glory days of his equestrian establishment had passed.

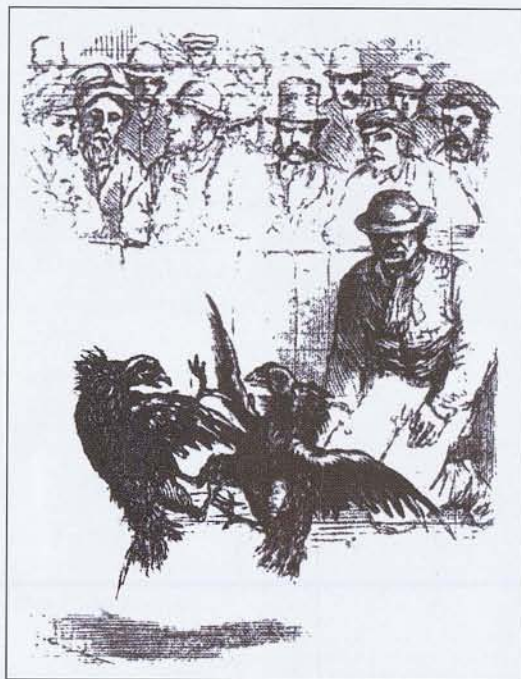


Hoboken Riding Academy, circa 1890. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

Animal Fighting

Spectator sports for the restive urban populace flourished during the mid-19th century, notes popular recreation historian Foster Rhea Dulles, including, in Northern New Jersey, the opening of “sporting halls” where fights between game-cocks were staged and dogs were pitted against each other. Ludlow’s Hotel in Union Hill (now North Bergen) regularly hosted well-attended animal fights, provoking a mixed response from the *Hudson County Daily Democrat*, which cheered bettors on “chicken disputes” but protested “canine encounters” and asserted “it would be to our advantage if we had a Bergh amongst us.”¹⁴

Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, the owner of which was a strong supporter of Bergh’s A.S.P.C.A., included in his December 22, 1866, edition a report on a “Fight Between Two Game Fowls for \$50” at Ludlow’s Hotel. The pit was behind the bar, “perhaps fourteen feet square, a circular space of which, about ten feet in diameter... covered with carpeting,” the report began. While around fifty spectators crowded around the circle, two birds were pulled out of barrels and weighed by “heelers” or handlers. They clipped off



“Cock Fighting At Union Hill, Hudson Co., New Jersey,” *Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, 1866. Library of Congress.

the birds’ plumage and “gaffs”—“wicked, keen points of steel—were fastened to their legs and two parallel lines marked in the center of the pit.” Brought to the center, the birds were then released, “and flew together with blind fury, amid the cheers of the spectators. After a short, very short, struggle, the larger cock fell to the floor, with the gaff of the other through his neck. The victorious bird flapped his wings over the outstretched body of his opponent, from whom the life-blood was fast ebbing away.”

Although animal cruelty laws were soon drafted to prohibit the fighting or baiting of a living animal—by the 1880s more than three-quarter of the states, including New Jersey, had such laws in effect—animal fighting has persisted in Hudson County, though not as openly as it did in the past. The executive director of the Associated Humane Societies of Newark, which was contracted by the City of Hoboken to provide animal warden services during 1978, complained to the *Jersey Journal* about fighting birds and the difficulties faced in shutting down pits. “We’ve picked up fighting cocks that people were raising in their backyards,” Lee Bernstein said. “And even with that, there was one time when we were about to raid a place with fighting cocks and they were tipped off somehow.”¹⁵

Dog fighting has also been reported in Hudson County since the turn of the last century, though again, more commonly in the past. Henry Bergh regularly wrote to prominent New Jerseyans during 1867, seeking passage of state animal cruelty laws. “Offenders” who were driven out of New York State by his Society, he wrote to an attorney, “now take refuge in your State to carry out their barbarities. Dog fighters who have been hunted out here, cross over to your side of the Hudson.” And historian Gerald Carson notes in *Men, Beasts and Gods* that another city animal—the brown or “Norway” rat commonly found in the city’s waterfront areas and in cellars—was the regular bait of “ratting terriers” trained to kill rodents in Hudson County dog pits during the 1870s. Bet-makers put their money on dogs to dispatch the most rats in the least amount of time; “one gifted dog named ‘Jack Underhill,’” writes Carson, “once finished off a hundred rats in 11½ minutes in Secaucus, New Jersey.”¹⁶

Despite animal cruelty legislation, owners often viewed their dogs both as tools for amusement and enrichment *and* as individuals worthy of devotion—a perspective that continued into the 20th century. Consider Dr. Arthur Hyde’s fighting dog, Rex, and his Hoboken wake—the 1922

photograph of which instigated this historical review of animal-human relationships in Hoboken. The same mixed perception of fighting dogs as entertainment *and* companions may be seen in the late 20th century as well. During several years of documenting street dogs in Hoboken and other cities in New Jersey and New York, photographer Robin Schwartz learned from the teenage owner of "Bozo"—depicted, in her 1987 portrait, on a Park Avenue stoop alongside his owner's seven-year-old sister—that the dog had been brought to Pennsylvania by family members for pit fighting.

Below: Robin Schwartz, *Bozo and Jackie*, 1987. Courtesy of Robin Schwartz.



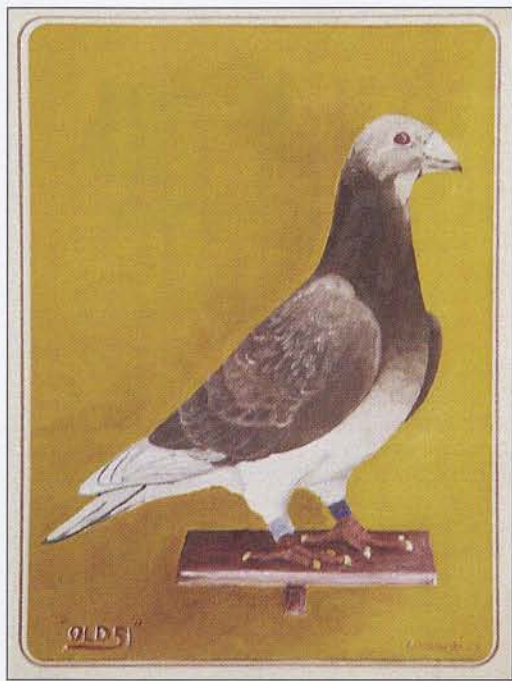
Pigeon Flying

Another once-popular Hoboken sport, pigeon flying (and racing), was largely introduced to the city in the late 19th-century by Italian immigrants. Newspaper clippings show regular threats to the keeping of rooftop pigeon coops since the adoption of Hoboken's Sanitary Code in 1891, as perceptions of cleanliness changed and as tolerance for bird-raising in a close urban setting waned.

As early as 1933, local newspaper editors were penning nostalgic editorials about the fate of the city's homing pigeons, predicting their certain banishment.

A zephyr from the romantic past is felt in Hoboken where the Homing Pigeon Club has asked for permission to continue the raising of homing pigeons within the city limits. Raising animals is forbidden by city ordinance. There was a time when a family would keep a cow. That family would sell milk to the neighbors, the small boy would drive the cow to pasture in one of many good grazing places in little Hoboken. The family might keep a couple of pigs, and along in the fall there would be some good fresh pork, and the makings of some smoked hams and shoulders for the winter. Chickens laid eggs that were strictly fresh. [...]

[Now] the cows are gone, the pigs are gone, the chickens are gone, there are spots where truck horses may still be kept, under zoning laws, but the old family buggy and phaeton have given way to the family car, and the homing pigeon, useful in war and in peace time before the coming of the wireless and the radio, is making its last stand in Hoboken. What a life of artificiality and practicality our civilization has reached.¹⁷



And yet, pigeon flyers did not disappear. According to a 1950 *Hudson Dispatch* article, “several score of pigeon owners [were maintaining] their flocks on rooftops in Hoboken.” The big issue was regulation. Hoboken pigeon keepers were going to have to purchase a permit to keep their birds, if a decision handed down by a local magistrate was upheld by a higher court. After receiving a petition from Mrs. Frances Petruzzelli of 208 Jefferson Street protesting the flock kept on the rooftop of her neighbor Salvatore Cracolizzi, Magistrate Charles DeFazio Jr. found the

pigeon owner in violation of a section of the 1891 Hoboken sanitary code, which requires the issuance of a permit for keeping animals and fowl within the city. Even though no permits had been sought from the Hoboken Board of Health for 35 years prior to his decision, DeFazio held that Cracolizzi had violated the then 59-year-old law requiring a \$1 pigeon license.¹⁸ (Court records from the period are not available, but current city health officers do not recall such a fee being paid.)

In 1968, when urban renewal efforts leveled many downtown taverns to build new housing, the fate of rooftop pigeon lofts along lower Hudson and River Streets made newspaper headlines. The city’s relocation supervisor for the \$3.7 million project heard time and again from the twenty-nine taverns, four hotels, fifty stores and 125 families living in the three-square-block area that they wanted to keep their pigeons with them. “For many years,” *Hudson Dispatch* reporter Jack Eckhardt explained, these pigeon fanciers “have taken pride in homemade pigeon coops built on apartment

Above: *Old 51*, Courtesy of the Hudson County Homing Pigeon Club.

rooftops or in their backyards.” While making arrangements for relocation and assisting in the liquidation of businesses after the Hoboken Housing Authority obtained an option to buy, the relocation supervisor learned that he might be faced with relocating 500 pigeons. Rotterdam Tavern owner George Tamesky’s remark was typical of the area’s residents: “What are you going to do about relocating my pigeons? Where I go they go.”¹⁹

Some Hoboken pigeon fanciers may have left the city to keep their birds, others may have found the next generation unreceptive to the sport, but it’s certain that rooftop lofts continued to disappear through the 1980s, leaving only the “exclusive coops” of the longstanding Hudson County Pigeon Club on Newark Street and a few independent breeder lofts. Today, the Hudson County Pigeon Club, though it still owns its building, no longer keeps birds and the number of members who regularly meet to talk about the sport has dropped from over two dozen to a handful. “It’s a dying game,” explained Vinnie Torre, co-owner of the Hillside Loft, the last breeder loft in Hoboken. Torre still races birds but sadly acknowledges, of all the flyers who used to be in the city, “I’m the last one.”²⁰



The Hudson County Homing Pigeon Club on Newark Street in Hoboken. Courtesy of McKevin Shaughnessy.

City Animals: Pests and Strays

Human Inquilines

They seem to have always been with us. Pigeons, sparrows, starlings, cockroaches, mice and rats—"human inquilines," according to zoologist John C. McLoughlin—"species that have adapted to human habitations and whose lives are, despite all our efforts to the contrary, inextricably tied to our own." Unlike other, less adaptive species, McLoughlin writes in *The Animals Among Us*, human inquilines—those living in our "nests," so to speak—have



... profited from the rise of civilized humanity. Through a fortuitous combination of behavioral adaptability and rapidity of generation, they have become an integral part of the human cultural experience. Sharing human food and habitat, migrations, disease, and history, they remain wild while bound to us in their dependence on the fruits of technology. Hated and despised for their competition with us, feared and admired for their persistence and vitality, trapped and poisoned through thousands of years, they continue to participate in our lives.¹

The response of Hoboken residents to some of these intrepid species has remained static over the years—cockroaches, for example, have *always* been unwelcome—but the perception of others has changed dramatically over time. Sometimes, the human viewpoint on a certain bird or beast has lurched from desired pet to despised pest to total indifference, all within

a generation or two. The most extreme example may be The Great Sparrow War of the late 19th-century. Waged throughout the country at the behest of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, this massed effort to exterminate European or "English" sparrows was launched only two decades after the *intentional* release in Brooklyn, in 1853, of a few pairs of these prolific, city-loving birds by homesick immigrants. "Extensive importations" from England and Germany brought the sparrows to major cities on the East Coast; from there, they spread widely. Hoboken newspapers of the 1860s fondly mention them. At first, "they were petted and watched over," ornithologists Clarence M. Weed and Ned Dearborn observe in their 1903 survey, *Birds in Their Relations to Man*. Special food and quarters were prepared for them for the winter and nesting boxes were installed in areas cleared of predators. Articles in the *Hudson Daily Democrat* encouraged Hobokenites to feed the newly introduced birds. "In the cities of the new nation," observes McLoughlin, "the sparrows found an earthly heaven."²

By 1875, English sparrows could be found across America, in cities like Hoboken—urban hubs packed with nest-friendly frame houses and steady supplies of grain in horse droppings, garbage and poultry feed. (The "peak of their abundance" was reached 15 years later, when the birds began to overwhelm public spaces. During the summer of 1892, naturalist Frank Chapman estimated 4,000 sparrows were fighting over one little pool in Central Park.³) Aggressive toward native birds, the English sparrows fouled buildings with their droppings. They had become *pests*: New Jersey specifically passed legislation in 1885 to exempt English sparrows from any protection from hunters; a year later, the New York legislature made it a misdemeanor to intentionally provide them with food or shelter. The Department of Agriculture's vast survey, *The English Sparrow in North America* (1883 and 1889), included more than thirty pages of recommendations on the most effective means of exterminating house sparrows, including use of firearms, traps and feed laced with strychnine and arsenic. Sides were drawn in the Great Sparrow War: In response to New York's anti-sparrow legislation, the A.S.P.C.A. included in its 1893 *Kindness to Animals* manual "for Use in Schools and Families," a lesson encouraging children to feed "bits of bread"

Far left: U.S Department of Agriculture, *The English Sparrow (Passer Domesticus) in North America*, "Map Showing the Distribution of the English Sparrow at the end of the year 1886" (1889 edition) depicts the spread of the birds like a red contagion spilling over North America. **Right:** Snares used to trap English sparrows, U.S. Department of Agriculture's 1889 *The English Sparrow in North America*. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

bird in connection with the movements of the nets, and to so control the force of pulling in closing them as to cause the net to strike the bird when the radius of the semicircle of either wing is at a vertical point. The irregularity of the flight of the Sparrow makes it difficult to catch many at one time.

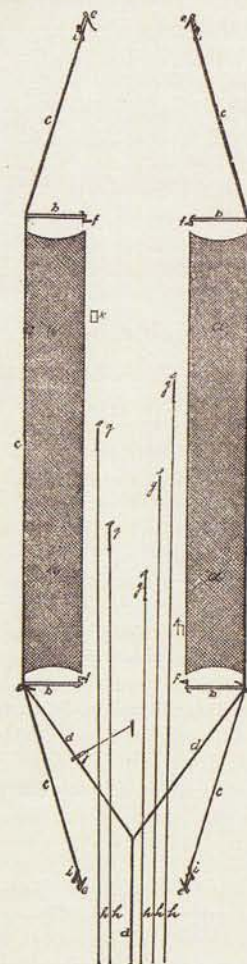


FIG. I.

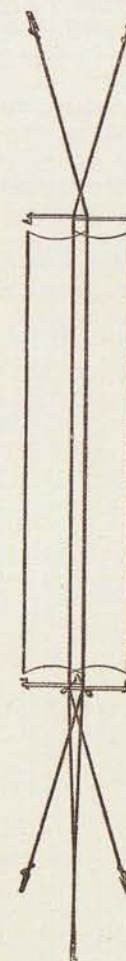


FIG. II.

The mechanical operation of these nets is shown in Figs. I and II. Fig. I shows nets open, lying flat upon the ground. By pulling pull-line (d) each net is caused to move upward and inward to the comple-

to sparrows during the winter, suggesting that “many [will otherwise] die of hunger.” Anti-sparrow forces responded that even though state bounties paid for dead sparrows, and millions were shot, “the decrease in numbers is hardly perceptible.” English sparrows became known as “Tramp” or “Hoodlum,” and some ornithologists went so far as to exile them from the world of birds. “The kingdom of ornithology is divided into two departments—birds and English sparrows,” Henry van Dyke asserted in his 1905 *American Ornithology for the Home and School*. “English sparrows are not real birds, they are little beasts.”⁴

The U.S. Government’s recommended means of ridding cities of English sparrows were ultimately not as effective in diminishing their numbers as the introduction of the combustion engine (cars replaced horses and their grain-rich stables) and new building materials (eliminating old wooden buildings used for nesting—also a favorite environment of rats and mice.) The ire of some city-dwellers and municipal governments intent upon guano-free buildings and parks was shifted to other prolific—and frequently non-native—birds. By the early part of the 20th century, when thousands of starlings were roosting and leaving their droppings on buildings with “broad, sheltering eaves”—such as those found on many government buildings—the Department of Agriculture was issuing reports on the second non-native bird to be successfully introduced to the Eastern United States by sentimental Europeans. Although the vigorous insect-eating habit of starlings encouraged the Department to describe them as largely beneficial, a 1925 circular conceded that “most people look upon the bird with suspicion as an alien.”⁵

Mixed feelings about human-dependent urban birds have continued into the late 20th and early 21st centuries. “War Declared on Pigeons,” reported the *Jersey Journal* in 1967, an early salvo in the ongoing battle between Hoboken’s Public Works and roosting flocks of common pigeons, descendants of domesticated Rock Doves first brought to North America in the 1600s and generations of homing pigeons or racers, escaped from rooftop coops. The preferred method of control in the 1960s was a high frequency siren; more recently, following vigorous complaints about “the pigeon problem” at City Hall, porcupine wire was installed above the building’s entrance to prevent roosting. Nevertheless, many Hoboken residents demonstrate through their diligent feeding of birds in public parks that John McLoughlin is correct to assert that the pigeon’s existence is “supported by human love.”⁶

Rats (to which pigeons are often compared) are supported by humans, too, though the support is unintentional and aversion to them unswerving. *Rattus norvegicus*—the Norway, brown, sewer, water, house or wharf rat—“lives anywhere it can find enough of a human economic system in which to conceal itself.”⁷ There are likely fewer rats in Hoboken today than there were 100 years ago, when many houses (especially on the west side) were made of wood, livery stables abounded and the waterfront was busy with ships, but no rat census exists. Past newspaper reports and commentaries about encounters with rats in the city often make more points about human character and city life than about the extent of Hoboken’s rodent population. The writer of a 1909 *Observer* report, “Rodent Almost Creates A Panic,” for example, used the appearance of a large rat on the dance floor during “the annual shirtwaist dance” as an opportunity to comment, with wry amusement, on the “cries of frightened maidens and matrons” who were rescued when “a hero” came forward to chase the rat back into a hole in the wall and cover it, allowing the band to strike up again. G. Gordon Liddy, the

HOBOKEN VERMIN EXTERMINATORS

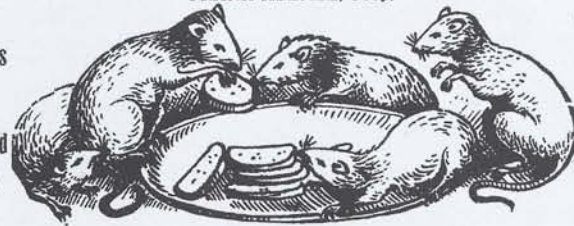
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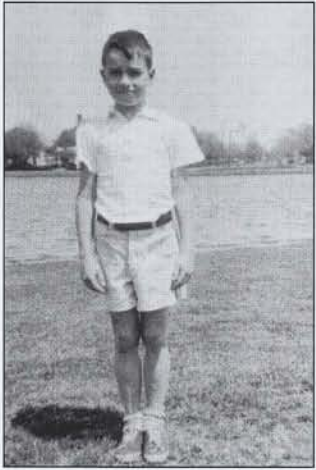
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An advertisement in *Polk's City Directory*, 1915, for Hoboken Vermin Exterminators at 305 Washington Street, includes an offer of trained ferrets for sale. A 1909 U.S. Department of Agriculture report, *The Brown Rat in the United States*, refers to the use of ferrets for rat-catching: “Tame ferrets, like weasels, are inveterate foes of rats and can follow the rodents into their retreats. Under favorable circumstances they are useful aids to the rat catcher, but their value is greatly overestimated,” as a dog is required to work alongside it. After a ferret “bolts the rats,” the dogs kill it, but “if unmuzzled ferrets are sent into rat retreats,” the report cautions, “they are apt to make a kill and then lie up sucking the blood of their victim” and cannot be retrieved.



self-described “crybaby” who was born in Hoboken and who later became a Watergate spy, claimed in his autobiography, *Will*, that he conquered his fear of rats during the 1940s by chasing them on the Hoboken waterfront, and later ate one. (Childhood chums from Hoboken laughed at the notion when broached by reporters.) And in 1969, when a down-on-its-luck, densely populated City of Hoboken was applying for federal funds to initiate a comprehensive educational, environmental and code enforcement program for rodent and insect control, the *Jersey Journal* reported claims by opponents of Mayor Louis DePascale that his administration was smuggling rats

into the city so he could create more payroll jobs. “I’ve observed rats running the streets downtown,” DePascale critic Thomas Sgherzi was quoted as saying. “And they’re not Hoboken rats.” He claimed the texture of Hoboken rats was “quite different from that of rats shipped into Hoboken.” Councilman Louis Francone, “so excited” by this claim that “he forgot the plural of mouse,” responded: “You’re all wet and you know it. It was I who rolled up my sleeves in efforts to run all the rats and mice out of the city.”⁸

Hoboken got its money for a program of health education and extermination—for several years. Then the funding dried up. In 1979, two years after the city extermination program was said to have ended for lack of state or federal funds, a *Jersey Journal* reporter stood with residents of a Hoboken Housing Authority building on Jackson Street and watched rats climb out of the sewers. An intensified extermination plan was restored; but in 1987, as Hoboken was experiencing a boom in the construction of luxury housing, the west side of the city was again reporting rats “roaming the streets.” The cause? Large construction projects, said the city Health Officer, “which dislodges rats from the area.”⁹

Almost Inquilines

McLoughlin identifies as “almost inquilines” several animals that are increasingly familiar to human residents of cities: the Gray Squirrel, Eastern Chipmunk, raccoon and opossum are adapting to living in human habitations, almost—like pigeons and rats and sparrows—to the point of dependence. Watching a squirrel



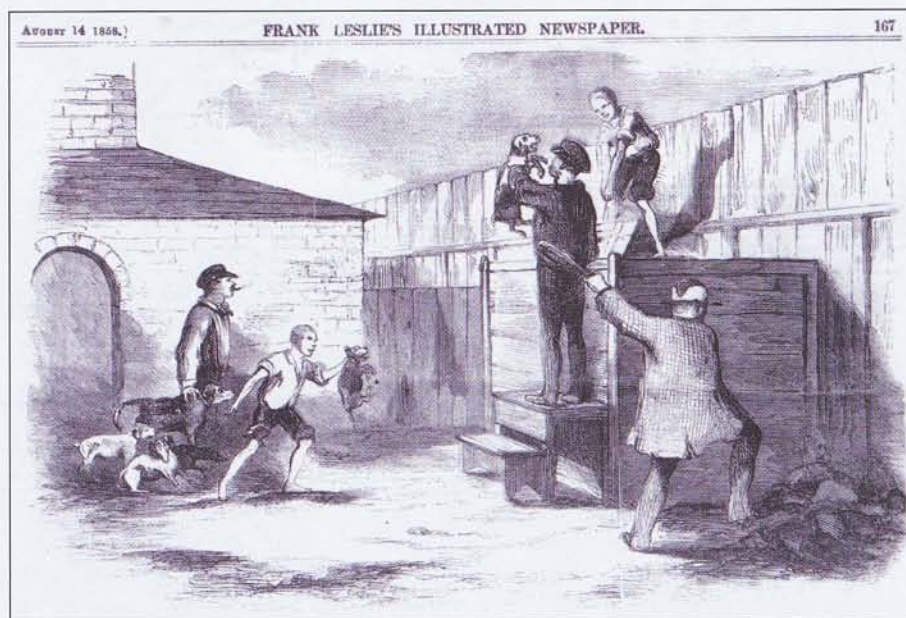
Above: “Gray Squirrel,” *Squirrels and Other Fur-Bearers* by John Burroughs, 1901 ed. Illustration in color after Audubon. Inset: a young G. Gordon Liddy from his autobiography, *Will*.

scamper in Hoboken parks today, oblivious to blaring radios, roaring cars, and other sounds of city life, a 21st century observer might be surprised to learn that just over a century ago, John Burroughs, “the most widely read voice of nature” of the 19th century, described the Gray Squirrel as “very shy.”¹⁰ Now they assert themselves wherever there are trees, enjoy the bulbs and buds of city gardens and make themselves at home in attics.

“Filthy Mongrels and Dirty Felines”

The reaction of city dwellers to stray dogs and cats has, over the years, been complicated by fear of disease (and, often, misinformation about transmission); various leash and licensing efforts; the availability of funds for pound keepers or animal control officers, and issues of ownership, care and responsibility for domesticated animals.

Historian Gerald Carson notes that during the late 19th and early 20th centuries regular rabies scares occurred in cities during summer months, “and they were [just as] regularly followed by the slaughter of dogs.” In the late 1850s, strays from Hoboken were caught in New York City’s campaign



to exterminate its “mad dogs.” When New York offered a bounty payment of 50 cents for each dog brought to its East 31st Street pound, “street boys” crossed the Hudson River for 5 cents on the ferry and trapped Hoboken’s dogs for sale on the return trip. An August 14, 1858, investigation of “Where the Dogs Go To,” in *Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, found that “many scores” of dogs from Hoboken and Jersey City were brought to New York City’s pound—essentially “a shed with an earthen floor and stalls”—where they were drowned each evening in a water-tight, 6-by-8 foot square, 7-foot-high tank. “Every sort of imaginable dog has its representative here—Newfoundlands, spaniels, terriers of every variety, poodles of every degree of insignificance and uselessness, bull-dogs, watch-dogs, fighting-dogs, sporting-dogs, strong dogs to be harnessed to rag-carts, and puny puppies for baby...” *Leslie’s* reported. All were put into the tank at sundown, a grate bolted over the top and the tank filled with water. Large dogs were clubbed first, and the *Leslie’s* reporter describes with horror how “a number of little boys” watched as “Andy,” a dog broker, bashed one dog, splattering those in attendance with “blood and brains.”

Concerns about hydrophobia (rabies) prompted the editors of the *Hudson County Daily Democrat* in early May 1869 to call upon Hoboken Mayor Hazen Kimball to halt “the running at large of dogs.” The Mayor’s response was sweeping: Using an ordinance passed ten years earlier, Kimball issued a proclamation that empowered “any person...to slay canines running at large, unmuzzled,” the *Daily Democrat* reported with approval. If an unleashed dog lacked a wire muzzle and a collar with the name and address of residence, he could be killed by anyone who caught him. “Interference with the slayer will subject the interferer to a fine of \$10.” Indeed, no one prevented one James McBride from using his pistol six months later to stop a Newfoundland dog that had “rushed through Meadow [now Park] and Willow Streets,” biting “some dozen or more hogs” and killing chickens he encountered when “finally chased into a cellar.”¹¹

The perception that an unmuzzled, unattended dog was “mad” was usually sufficient, in the public mind, to legitimize “the cur’s shooting”—often right on the street and without any investigation. Rabies scares and the rou-

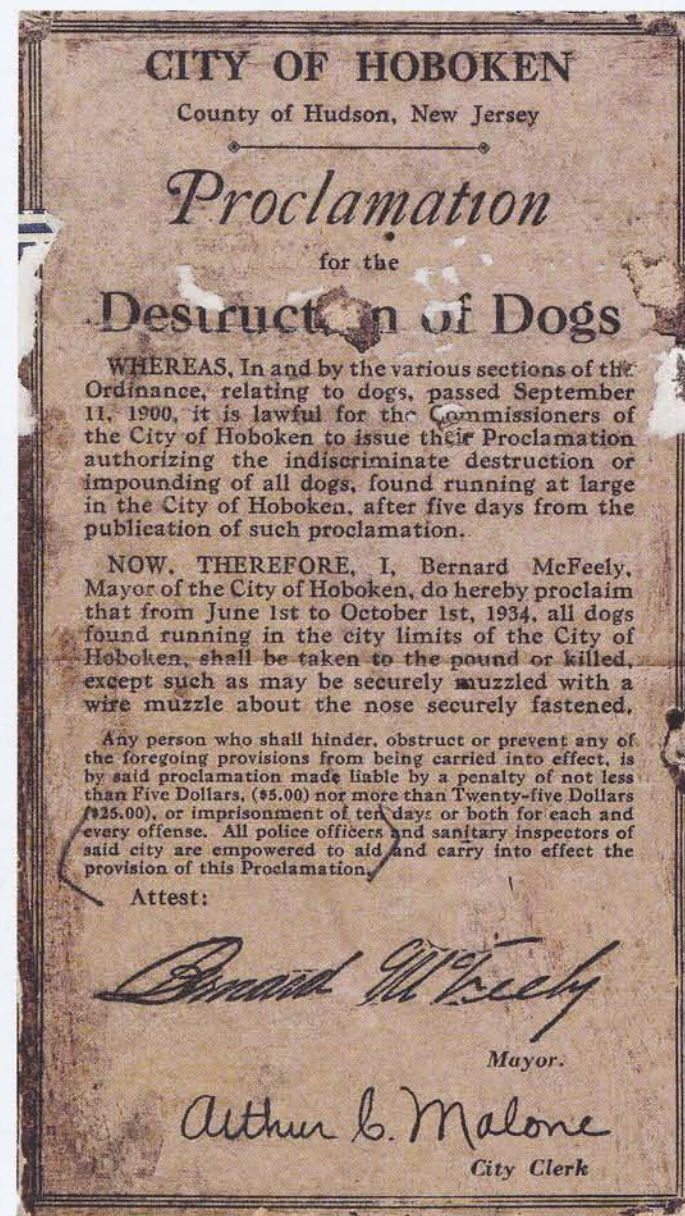
Left: “Slaughtering the Dogs—‘Andy’ in his glory,” *Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, August 1858. Library of Congress collection.

tine killing of stray dogs became so endemic in Hudson County that by 1912 the county's Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals called for local ordinances that would prevent dogs from being killed without determination of viciousness and would establish a "dogs' court," as well as institute strict licensing and leashing laws. Only the latter reform was adopted by Hoboken, though an "assistant pound keeper" was added to the city payroll at \$75 month—the S.P.C.A. had been handling "dog confiscation" on its own—and monies were also appropriated to purchase a horse and wagon for the assistant's work. The following year, the S.P.C.A. reported capturing over 5,000 dogs in Hudson County (two-thirds of which were from Jersey City) but investigated only 196 "mad dog" cases. Only four dogs showed any signs of rabies after autopsies.¹²

"Mad dog scares," however, continued to make headlines, until they were pushed aside during the summer of 1916 by a new fear that was gripping the East Coast—that stray dogs and cats were carriers of an epidemic form of polio, or "infantile paralysis." West Hoboken "is literally alive with dogs and cats and one cannot go more than a block or two without seeing a filthy mongrel or dirty feline basking in the sun, rummaging through garbage barrels or wallowing in gutters," the *Hudson Dispatch* reported in July, adding that strays "might prove to be carriers of the germs that develop infantile paralysis." Frightened residents of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania rounded up strays, banned dogs and cats from schoolyards and washed their pets in a diluted solution of carbolic acid or had them euthanized. *The New York Times* proclaimed on July 26 that New York City alone had killed 72,000 cats in the "paralysis fear."

Polio was not a new disease, but its 20th-century manifestation was perplexing to scientists and public health officials as the paralytic form was most prevalent among middle-class children who had good care and lived in clean homes, countering theories that uncleanness increased the risk of disease infection. And though experts did come forward to refute any connection between polio and stray animals, they did persist in viewing "the great unwashed" as the likely carriers. "The irony of the polio story," writes historian Naomi Rogers in *Dirt and Disease, Polio Before FDR*, "is that health experts targeted just those homes"—the homes of poor, immigrant families—"in which children were likely to already be immune," as they had been infected, and developed immunity, in infancy.¹³

Two years after the paralysis fear prompted the killing of pets and strays, a vigorous local campaign to kill "mad dogs" returned. As World War I was raging overseas, Jersey City police officers competed during the summer of 1918 for "a handsome fountain pen" to be presented to "the most active dog killer;" but they were quick to point out that their enthusiastic support for the operation, conducted on behalf of the entire county, was mostly propelled by its link to the home-based war effort. Stray dogs shot or poisoned by police



Mayor Bernard McFeely's 1934 "Proclamation for the Destruction of Dogs." Hoboken Historical Museum collection.

and sanitary inspectors were to be turned into “gloves and vests to protect aviators from the cold” and rendered into “oils and grease for guns and rifles;” live “undesirable dogs under 30 pounds” were donated by Hudson County municipalities to the U.S. Government to test poison gases used “by American soldiers in the war against the Huns.” With a local economy buoyed by military investment—Hoboken was the point of embarkation and debarkation for three million doughboys during the years of U.S. involvement in World War I and more than 1,800 Hoboken youth had enlisted in the armed forces by mid-1918, the “campaign against the dogs” had few public critics in the Mile Square City. A former schoolteacher wrote to the *Jersey Journal*, but mostly to assert that gassing the dogs would be more humane than lacing meat with strychnine and watching the animals convulse and die over the course of an hour. Editorial writers for the *Journal* declared their unstinting support for the admittedly “drastic measures” adopted against all unleashed dogs, even though their own reporters noted that most of the dogs eating the poison-laced meat were docile and reports of “hundreds of dog bites” each year were not followed by reports of hundreds of confirmed rabid dogs. “One human life is worth more than all the dogs in Christendom,” the *Jersey Journal* insisted. “Safety from the dog menace must be assured, even if it is necessary to kill every last dog in Jersey City.” Most of all, the Jersey City Health Officer announced, “there is satisfaction in knowing that every dog we deliver [to the rendering] factory helps in the making of munitions and in dealing the death blow to the Kaiser’s army.”¹⁴

Summer proclamations by Hoboken mayors, authorizing the “indiscriminate destruction or impounding of all dogs found running at large in the City,” continued until the *next* world war. In 1942, the New Jersey Department of Health responded to a report of 675 dogs and four humans afflicted with rabies in the state and initiated a Rabies Control Program requiring the registration and tagging of all dogs. Reports of “mad dogs” began to disappear from headlines. Instead, during the war years, Hobokenites might find a gentle reminder of the worthiness of leashing and licensing their dogs, not for health reasons, but as a July 1943 article in the *Jersey Journal* asserted, “for the elimination of losses by ‘victory’ gardeners, and others, working to increase the supply of food.” A voluntary anti-rabies immunization program was jointly introduced by state and local health departments five years later.¹⁵

The Pound Keeper

Mayor Hazen Kimball’s 1869 proclamation may have allowed anyone to destroy stray dogs in Hoboken, but many preferred to bring dogs to a pound established in the rear of a local stable. “Some of the dogs are reclaimed” after the payment of a fee, the *Hudson County Daily Democrat* explained, “but the greater part of them are hurried out of this mundane sphere to the Dog’s Elysium by a blow on the head with a sledge hammer.” Along with “almost every species of the dog family,” the 16-by-16 foot enclosure included “what stray goats and geese that may be picked up.” By law, the pound keeper—in 1869, the position was held by Frederick Dyckman, who was also the Sluice-Gate Keeper of the city’s several sewers—was required to keep all dogs placed in his charge for 48 hours, “and then, if not redeemed, to kill them.” The brief waiting period and the method of dispatch were not debated in the pages of the *Daily Democrat*. Public outrage was focused, rather, on the pound keeper’s attempts to extort extra payment from dog owners seeking to retrieve their animals and his “habit of encouraging young boys in hunting up and bringing him [all the] goats, etc. they can find, and for each arrival paying a small sum of money.” Dyckman’s actions, one parent protested to the City Council, not only brought about a loss of education but was “a commencement in dishonesty, which may eventually lead to further crime.”¹⁶

Complaints about various pound keepers would continue into the 20th century, as the City of Hoboken (responsible, like other local governments, for its own animal control) often provided only the most marginal funding and staffing for the pound, long a domain of the board of health. In fact, a 1912 *Sanitary Survey of Hoboken* reported it was “a staggering blow to find that of the \$2,468,152.45 spent by the City of Hoboken in 1912, only \$4,516.20 or .0018% was spent on health”—and that included not only the pound keeper, dog-seizer and dog census taker, but also the city’s health inspector, health warden (dealing specifically with contagious disease), milk inspector and two city nurses. By 1968, the city was looking to eliminate the need for a dog pound—and a fulltime dog-catcher—by contracting with the S.P.C.A. to catch strays and bring them to an out-of-town facility. Hoboken’s



veteran dog warden, Anthony J. “Popeye” Pantoliano—so called “because he bore a striking resemblance to the crusty cartoon character”—had claimed in April of that year that he had stopped killing animals at the pound on 14th Street seven months before because the gas chamber was inoperative. (One source claims the chamber was merely a tank with a duct that passed through the wall to the exhaust pipe of Pantoliano’s running car.) *Hudson Dispatch* reporters pointed out that the Humane Society in Lodi, which had been picking up live animals at the Hoboken shelter for a year and half, was on the same property as a company with a federal license to sell live animals to research labs.¹⁷

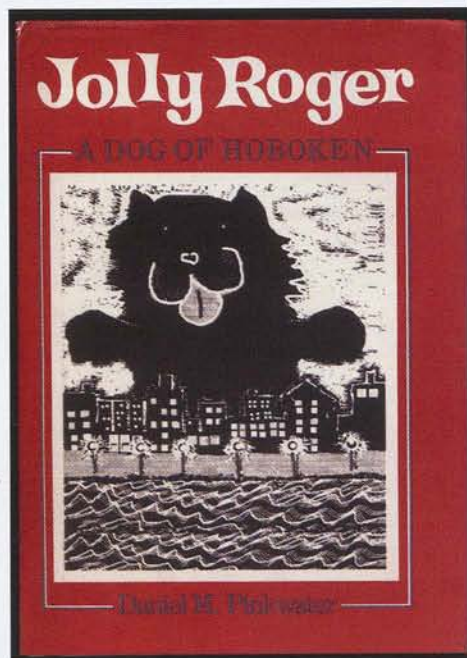
Above: Benedict J. Fernandez, *Stray Dogs on Observer Highway*, circa 1972. Courtesy of the photographer and Hoboken Almanac.

The pound was closed but available records indicate what the city’s Health and Welfare Director noted ten years later: Hoboken did not have “a fully operational dog-catching and animal care service for some time.” In June 1978, one month after Hoboken contracted with the Associated Humane Societies of Newark for animal warden services, the group’s executive director, Lee Bernstein, declared the Mile Square City was “the worst” of the 52 municipalities served by his organization. “Bernstein complained that his men have been threatened with knives and sticks when they try to pick up stray animals,” the *Jersey Journal* reported. “In one case, the city sanitarian was pushed down a flight of steps while trying to confiscate a pet. ‘We signed a complaint against the man,’ Bernstein said. ‘But he was related to a police lieutenant and he got off with a \$25 fine. Hoboken is just too political.’”¹⁸

Today, city health officers say, Hoboken’s population of strays is not very large. The City again contracts with the Associated Humane Society, which transports animals to its Newark facility. State law mandates they be held there for seven days before being put up for adoption or killed.

Caring for Strays

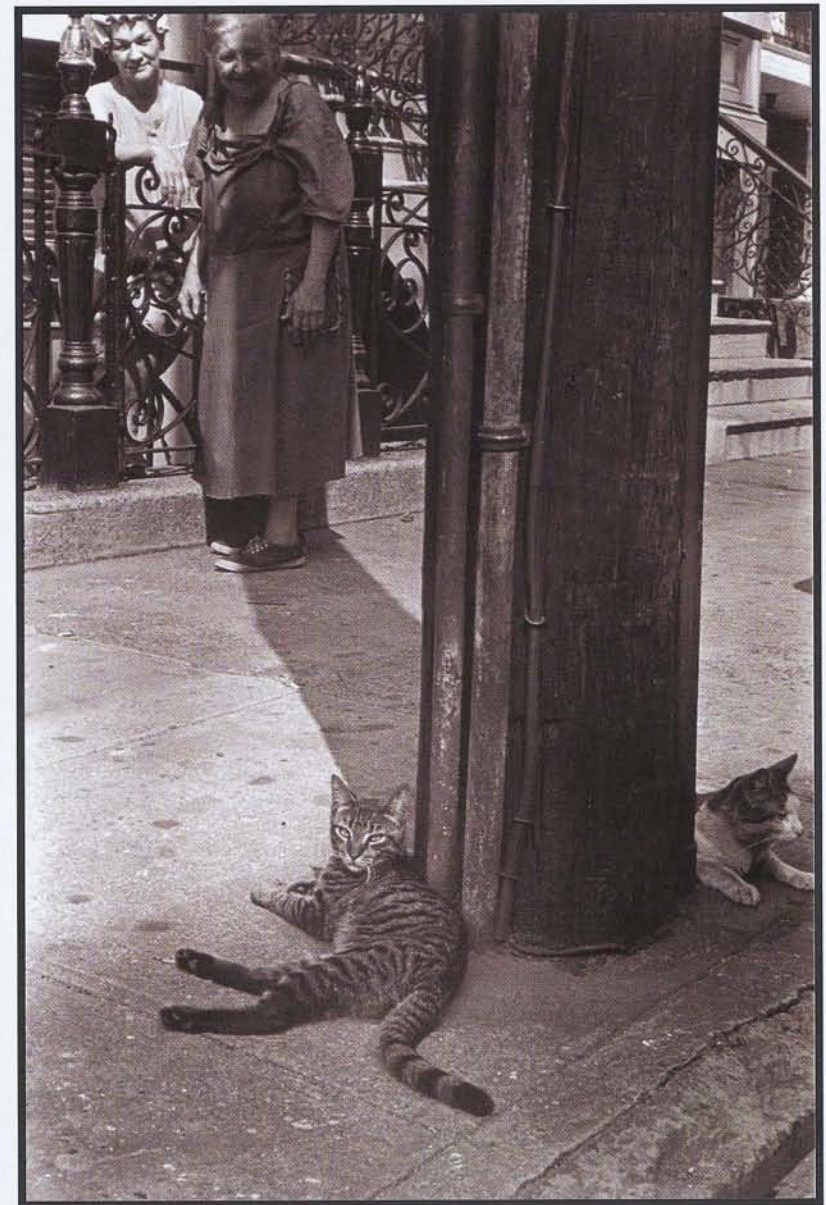
While local editorial writers and city representatives have regularly heaped disdain (and firepower, poison and gas) on “filthy mongrels and dirty felines,” some Hoboken residents have just as habitually rescued, fed and protected city strays, whose brief lives are otherwise marked by starvation, disease, car accidents, harsh weather and attacks by humans and other animals. Positive reaction to the presence of strays on the city’s streets (in the 20th and 21st centuries, at least) has ranged from organized campaigns by volunteers to humanely trap, neuter or spay, and put homeless animals up for adop-



tion; to individual routines of feeding; to acceptance of strays as part of city life; to a kind of appreciation for the perceived tenacity of particular street dogs or cats. Children's author Daniel Pinkwater, a former Hoboken resident, writes in *Jolly Roger, A Dog of Hoboken*, about a legendary city stray who became "King of the Dock Dogs." Jolly Roger is much beloved and admired by Hobokenites, except for the dog-catcher. Pinkwater may or may not have been exaggerating when he described how the cook from "the Five Star Chinese-American Restaurant" brought to the dockyard gates every day "two big plates of shrimp foo yung, Jolly Roger's favorite," but such acts of daily

kindness certainly sustained some of the dogs Hoboken photographer Robin Schwartz documented during the 1980s. From 1982 through 1984, and again in 1987, Schwartz not only photographed the harsh effects of urban life on neglected animals and those used for fighting, but also observed, in a pre-gentrified Hoboken, places of refuge and acts of compassion by people who were themselves living or working in difficult environments. Every weekday for years, she remembers, the meat-cutters at United Hotel and Restaurant Supply (formerly on Observer Highway) fed scraps to the same pack of stray dogs. When the animals were unaccountably rounded up over a weekend, the owner and employees at United were helpless to prevent it; and though they tried to find the dogs at the S.P.C.A. pound in Jersey City, they were unsuccessful. Today, even the site of that everyday kindness is gone: The United Hotel and Restaurant Supply building was torn down in early 2004.

Inset: Cover, *Jolly Roger, A Dog of Hoboken* by Daniel M. Pinkwater, 1985. Pinkwater, a former Hoboken resident, describes in his children's book how Jolly Roger becomes King of the *dock dogs*. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.



Benedict J. Fernandez, *Women Watch Hoboken Street Cats Sunning Themselves*, circa 1972. Courtesy of the photographer and Hoboken Almanac.

CANARY BIRD

During much of the 19th century, the vast majority of dogs and cats, though present in large numbers in New Jersey cities, received only minimal care by their owners. Unless the dogs were used for hunting or fighting, they and their feline counterparts simply weren't considered valuable enough to warrant treatment. The horse, writes Ray Thompson in his history of New Jersey's veterinarians, "was the king of America's animal population;" consequently, "small animal health care was a very small part of the veterinary medical practice." A veterinarian during the early- to mid-19th century might assist a cat or dog after a day's work, as a courtesy to the owner, Thompson adds, but no payment would be requested. (That was probably for the best, as the diseases of small animals were little studied in the 1880s, even at veterinary colleges.)¹

Despite the dearth of proper care, late 19th-century city dwellers enjoyed looking at and keeping small animals. In Manhattan, one could easily purchase live rabbits, guinea pigs, dogs, birds and cats, as well as monkeys and anteaters, to keep caged at home. "Small, tweeting birds," were most popular, notes Gilded Age historian M.H. Dunlop, and the public appetite for canaries seemed endless—at least in Manhattan, where a single pet shop would import 15,000 canaries for Christmas alone. Street vendors sold the small yellow or greenish birds on the street regardless of weather, subjecting them to pneumonia; and buyers purchased the birds with virtually no knowledge of how to care for them. Outrage at the perceived disposability of canaries inspired Anson D.F. Randolph to pen *The Autobiography of a Canary Bird* in 1866; the small tract is dedicated "to all canary birds living in captivity." Narrated by a caged canary, the "author" begged bird owners to peruse its pages "hoping, thereby to improve the condition of my fellow captives."²

And yet, some area residents, like Otilie Assing, a Hoboken-based, radical German journalist who translated Frederick Douglass's autobiography into German and was his intimate friend for 28 years, were outspoken in their

Right: Illustration from *The Autobiography of a Canary Bird* by Anson D.F. Randolph, 1866.

City Animals: Companions and Family



"Though only a tiny bird, I had been of some use in this great, big world." Page 11.

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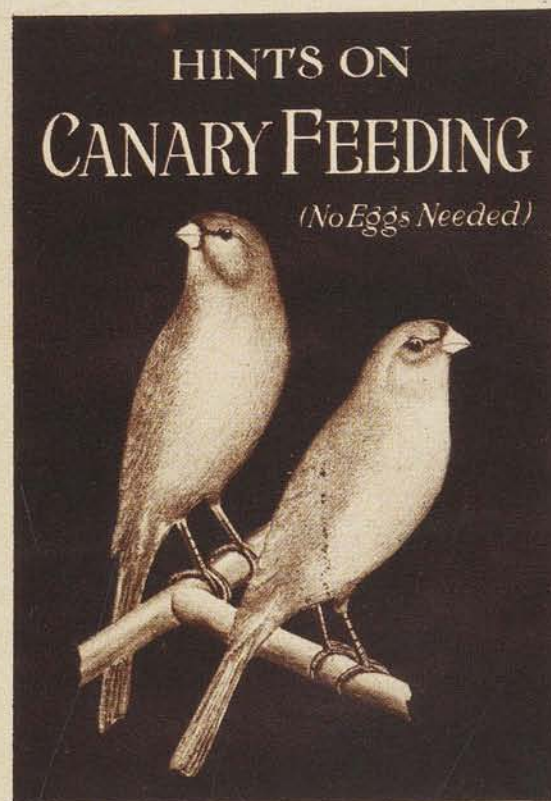
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support of domesticated animals, part of a broader vision of a better, more just society. "For any kindness done to animals, I feel personally thankful," Assing remarked to Douglass in a December 10, 1878, letter that included her usual commentary on current events and their shared commitment to women's emancipation and civil rights for African Americans. Of the 27 surviving letters from Assing to Douglass—she requested that on her death all her correspondence be burned—most included some reference to animals, including advice to Douglass that he pay special attention to the farm animals in his care. "The more you humanize her the more you will be rewarded by her affection," she remarks on a new calf in the Douglass barn;

Above: Cover, foldout advertisement for Spratt's Patent Limited of Newark, New Jersey, "Hints on Canary Feeding," circa. 1866.

keeping the stable warm for the mothering cow, she suggests, will result in more milk.

Assing also wrote to her "dear Friend" about those closest to her in Hoboken, detailing her exchanges with friends and colleagues ("they are about as great lovers of animals as I am"), and her special devotion to "one green fowl," a parrot named "Maca." She delighted in spoiling the bird and marveled at his attentiveness to her. In a letter written to Douglass just after Christmas 1878, she describes Maca: sitting "on my shoulder, caressing me, playing, cleaning his plumage, and manifesting in his own demonstrative way that he is one of the happiest birds living."

Assing's letters to Douglass, signed "Yours ever, Ottilia," often included the salutations "Love to the whole animal company!" or "Love to all our four-legged friends!" Not surprisingly, perhaps, she was a strong supporter of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. She even made its president, Henry Bergh, executor of her will. Although another attorney eventually took the position of executor when she died in Paris in 1884, Ottilie Assing's last will and testament established both a trust fund for Frederick Douglass "for the term of his natural life" and provided for a large bequest to the A.S.P.C.A..³ The funds

would help secure the organization's future as the new century approached.

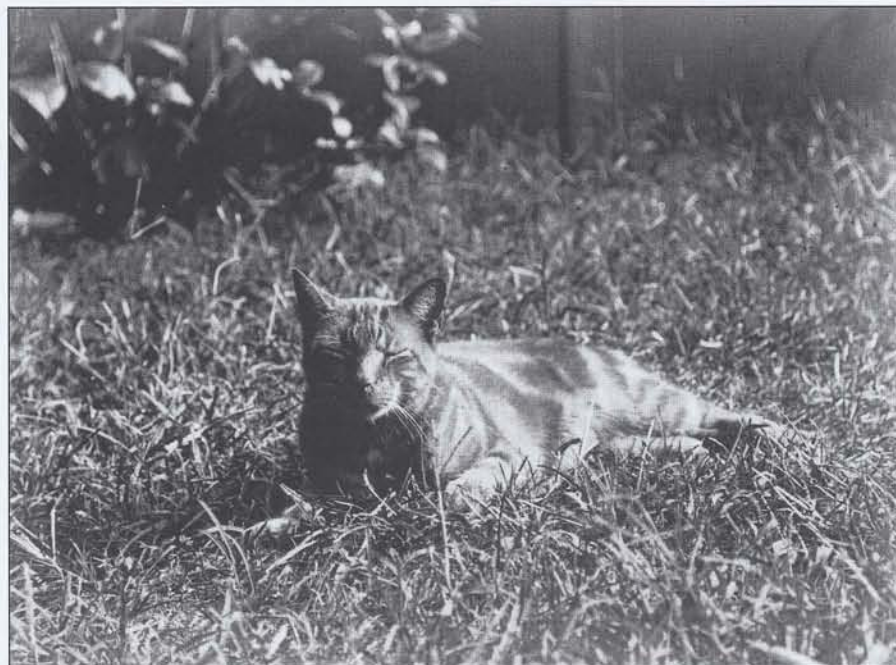
Within the next forty years, into the early part of the 20th century, the hierarchy of city animals would shift dramatically, as automobiles and trucks overtook horses as the primary means of transportation. Horses began to disappear from the city landscape, leaving behind smaller animals, many of them "pets." At first, writes historian Ray Thompson, New Jersey veterinarians had difficulty accepting the shift away from equine and bovine care. But when an economic downturn began after World War I and culminated in the Great Depression, veterinarians observed that "owners of small animals... despite the hard times, somehow managed to improve the quality of medical care for their household pets." Veterinary hospitals for small animals began to open in New Jersey cities.



Animal Companions in the Great War

Animals were on the front lines during World War I, as workers *and* as mascots. Local newspaper articles make clear that servicemen sought out animal mascots while serving in Europe, and even returned with them to Hoboken, their port of debarkation. Those on the home front were regularly treated to photos of soldiers returning with little dogs perched in their rucksacks and group portraits of various companies with canine mascots wrapped in flags. In August 1919, both the *Hudson Dispatch* and the *New York World* excitedly reported on “the greatest collection of animals as mascots that have yet been brought to America on transport”: the “Leathernecks” of the Second Division arrived in Hoboken on the *George Washington* with fifty cages holding four anteaters, a dozen dogs (pure and mixed breed), three deer and a fox. The deck of the *George Washington* was said to resemble “something like a menagerie.” One of the anteaters, the *Dispatch* remarked, had “joined the marines five years ago in Nicaragua and has been with them through all the fighting in France.”⁴

Above: From *New York Tribune*, March 7, 1919, a returning soldier and his dog. Hoboken Public Library Historical Scrapbook Collection.



The Crisson family of 1033 Garden Street documented their domestic life in Hoboken during several years before and just after World War I. Among glass negatives of children at play and social events, are several portraits of their pet cat “Pete,” including this August 31, 1917, image of him in their backyard. From the collections of the New Jersey Historical Society.

Local newspaper writers, too, noted the change in urban veterinary practices and also a growing public affection, as the 20th century progressed, for “the family cat or dog.” The front page of the *Jersey Journal* touted the March 1933 opening of a Hudson County veterinary clinic for small animals that were “not much less loved than are members of the family.” Several months later the paper highlighted the tale of a Hoboken woman, “a habitual drunkard” sentenced to 15 days in the County Jail, who was saved from incarceration after the judge learned her absence would leave her two dogs without care. “She lived alone in two furnished rooms on Monroe,” the *Journal* explained, and “earned \$2 a week as a charwoman...[H]er only companions were her two dogs,” a spaniel named Bessie and her pup, Ruby. “She told the judge no one would take care of her pets if she were sent away.



The woman's plea touched the heart of the judge—he has a pet dog himself." After noting that women have been saved from jail because of their *children*, but never before because of *dogs*, the judge concluded: "I'll reconsider your sentence and place you on probation for six months. Now go home and take care of yourself and your dogs."⁵

Although a stereotype of contemporary American pet owners has developed in which they are portrayed as indulgent, neurotic and rich—and, of course, some *are*—for the better part of the 20th century, Hoboken, at least, has been home to animal caretakers of modest or little means. Photographing during the 1980s on the west side of Hoboken (historically the poorest part of the city), Robin Schwartz encountered many residents who sacrificed much to provide for their animals.

On the east side of town, the Kostka family shared their comfortable Garden Street home—and their table—with both a very small bird and a very large dog. When their Great Dane Leo died in 1975 at the age of twelve, Paul Kostka, a retired city policeman, created a memorial in the backyard, surrounded by old city traffic signals, an obsolete call box, and other reminders of the cityscape Paul had once known so well. "The item Kostka cherishe[d] most," *Jersey Journal* reporter William H. Taft announced in a 1977 article about the unusual backyard, was his memorial to the family dog. "The



Left, top to bottom: Robin Schwartz, *Hoboken Lady and Her Dogs*, Jackson Street and Paterson Plank Road, 1983, courtesy of Robin Schwartz. The Kostka family, including their Great Dane Leo, gathered for dinner, circa 1965. Mary Kostka enjoying a cigarette and the company of her pet bird, circa 1965. Both from the Papers of Paul and Mary Kostka, gift of Peter Barasckai and Theresa Howard. Hoboken Historical Museum collection. **Inset:** Paul Kostka's memorial to Leo, circa 1976. It no longer exists. Papers of Paul and Mary Kostka, gift of Peter Barasckai and Theresa Howard. Hoboken Historical Museum collection.



In Memoriam

Frank died April 10, 2001.



Remember Frank for his love of walking all around Hoboken. He had his own friends, and he enjoyed visiting. He knew exactly where he was going and what he wanted to do. Every evening he would make the rounds, hopefully getting a few biscuits along the way.

He loved a nice snowfall and chewing on spring grass and playing with sticks in the yard.

He was a gentleman dog, doing his job guarding the house, keeping the cats in line. His affection was elegant. His devotion complete.

Frank must have been somewhere between 12 and 14 years old, and though his heart and mind were willing, his legs just gave out and could not support him anymore. He only had a few bad days, and finally put his head in my lap, exhausted, and let me know it was OK to let him go. He was the focus of my life for nine years, and will be in my heart forever.

monument is flanked by cast figures of two dogs ... and a pair of lions (for 'Leo')," Taft continued. "An ever-burning light glows above" the urn that held Leo's cremated remains.⁶

The wish to memorialize his dog did not, of course, originate with Paul Kostka—see page 6 in the *Introduction* on the founding of the first pet cemetery in the United States in the late 19th century—nor did such personal tributes end in Hoboken with Kostka's memorial to Leo. When Hoboken artist Jennifer Place's collie, Frank, died in April 2001, she, like Paul Kostka, was a homeowner and had land around her house in which to bury her beloved "gentleman dog" (and to plant a dogwood tree). But she, too, needed to do more. During the nine years Place had walked with Frank through the streets of Hoboken, they had both acquired many friends. To them, she sent memorial cards she designed. Then, for Frank and for herself, she set about making a memorial art piece. The idea for a "quivering stick," she writes, comes from a 1999 novel, *Being Dead*, by British writer Jim Crace. The book describes a practice from a century ago which may be an invention of the author. Place explains: "If a life had been cut short, family, friends and neighbors would gather around the deceased to hold a midnight 'quivering,'" shaking and stomping and rattling sticks with clacking wooden rings, awakening the entire neighborhood. "Through this process the misdeeds of the departed would be shaken away, leaving an unopposed path to heaven. Afterward would come much reminiscing and fond recollections of the life lived." The artist selected "noisy things, such as Frank's dog tags," and favorite objects, "like the stick he would chase and fetch

in the yard" to assemble into a kinetic sculpture. Place added items that reinforced her memory of Frank: some of his fur, his leash, photos taken over the years. "It was my intention," she writes, "to both help his spirit find a good place to rest and to honor his memory with a tangible, visual record." The resulting object, when shaken, calls to mind the sounds made whenever Frank shook his head in playful anticipation or greeting. In repose, the sculpture also makes Frank's absence palpable, with his hanging leash waiting for the dog it delighted; it makes tangible, too, the loss to that other one, the one who held the leash, who walked alongside Frank every day. ♦



Inset: Memorial card for Frank, 2001. Above: *A Memory of Frank*, and details, 2001-2004, mixed media including wood, metal, glass, photos), 46" x 5." Both by Jennifer Place. Courtesy of the artist.

Introduction

- ¹ John Berger, "Why Look At Animals?" *About Looking* (Vintage Books: New York, 1991), 5.
- ² Thanks to Hoboken photo researcher Sheilah Scully for copying these images and providing them to Hoboken Historical Museum.
- ³ "Hoboken Dentist's Dog Lies In State In Costly Coffin," *Hudson Dispatch*, February 8, 1922. Unless otherwise noted, all information about Rex's funeral is from this article.
- ⁴ Unknown photographer's notes accompanied original Bettmann image.
- ⁵ Susan Olsen, Executive Director of Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery, which opened in the Bronx in 1863, advised that plot owners had sometimes shared their mausoleums with pets.
- ⁶ For more on the Hartsdale cemetery see Malcolm Kriger's *The Peaceable Kingdom in Hartsdale* (New York: Rosywick Press, 1983.) There was no headstone for Rex. Dr. Hyde had not paid for "perpetual care" of his gravesite.
- ⁷ John C. McLoughlin, *The Animals Among Us: Wildlife in the City, An Appreciation of Inquilines – The Beasts That Share Our Bed and Board* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 4-10.
- ⁸ Sarah B. Landry, *Peterson First Guide to Urban Wildlife* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1994), 16.
- ⁹ Hoboken Health Code, adopted by the Mayor and Council of the City of Hoboken, January 7, 1959.
- ¹⁰ Geoffrey W. Clark, *History of Stevens Institute of Technology* (Jersey City: Jensen/Daniels Publishers, 2000), 18, 28.
- ¹¹ Clark refers to *Census Reports* published in 1882, 1895 and 1902.
- ¹² Robert L. Stevens Fund for Municipal Research in Hoboken, *Sanitary Survey of Hoboken* (Hoboken, NJ: October 1913), 13, 22, 23.
- ¹³ From a Hoboken Dog Association description provided by the organization, April 2004. H.D.A. members might be amused or disheartened to learn that Hoboken dog runs have been the focus of complaint and City negotiation for well over a quarter century. In June 1978 the city's health officer threatened to close as a "health hazard" the dog run installed by the city the year before in Church Square Park. Fifth Street neighbors had complained vigorously about the smell. The run received a reprieve when the City's Health and Welfare Director announced he would look for more Green Acres funding to remove sand, top the run with asphalt and install "pipes leading into the city's sewer system." See: William Taft, "Health officials close dog run," *Jersey Journal*, 18 June 1978 and "Farina to keep dog run – with corrections," *Jersey Journal* 19 June 1978.
- ¹⁴ Berger, "Why Look At Animals?" *About Looking*, 6-7, 15.

Neighbors

- ¹ Jen Hill, *An Exhilaration of Wings: The Literature of Birdwatching* (New York: Penguin, 1999), xiv.
- ² Roger Tory Peterson, "Forward," in John Bull, *Birds of the New York Area* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). Peterson writes that New York City compares favorably with Philadelphia (with Audubon's contributions) and Concord, Massachusetts (with Thoreau's writings) for the work of naturalists.

³ *History of Hoboken* (Hoboken, NJ: Hoboken Board of Trade, 1907), 15.

⁴ Frances Cooper-Cuntz, *Biographical Sketch of the Late William Cooper of Hudson County, New Jersey* (New York: Gillis Brothers and Turnure, ca. 1864). Unless otherwise noted, all information about William Cooper is from this memorial sketch, written and published by his daughter. She writes that Cooper also assisted botanist John Torrey, who prepared many reports following U.S. government-sponsored western expeditions after 1850. Torrey dedicated his *Compendium of the Flora of the Northern and Middle States* to Cooper "as a testimony of respect for his attainments as a naturalist and an expression of high esteem for his virtues."

⁵ Ludlow Griscom, *Birds of the New York City Region* (New York: The American Museum of Natural History, 1923), 48-49.

⁶ For example, in his 1895 book *Wake-Robin*, John Burroughs (1837-1921), the best known nature writer of the 19th century, wrote about a bird he discovered in the woods: "The male was in full plumage and I reluctantly shot him for a specimen." (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913), 100.

⁷ *History of Hoboken*, 17.

⁸ This history of New Jersey wildlife conservation and the role of the NJ Audubon Society was derived from: Libby Harrover Johnson, *New Jersey Audubon, One Hundred Years and Still Counting* (Bernardsville, NJ, 1997). Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from this source.

⁹ Alvin F. Harlow, *Henry Bergh, Founder of the A.S.P.C.A.* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1957), 172. The New York Audubon Society was founded in 1886.

¹⁰ In the introduction to Charles A. Shriner, *The Birds of New Jersey* (Fish and Game Commission of the State of New Jersey, 1896), 8-11.

¹¹ Roy Kahn, "Frustrated forester brings wildlife to heart of Hoboken," *Jersey Journal*, 9 November 1981.

¹² Hill, *An Exhilaration of Wings*.

¹³ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, *The 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, 6.

¹⁴ Hill, xviii.

¹⁵ Griscom, *Birds of the New York City Region*; John Bull, *Birds of the New York Area* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 433.

¹⁶ McLoughlin, *The Animals Among Us*, 57-63.

Workers

¹ Richard Mason, MD, *The Gentleman's New Pocket Farrier, Comprising A General Description of the Noble and Useful Animal The Horse* (Richmond, VA: Peter Cottom, 1825), iv-v.

² Gerald Carson, *Men, Beasts, and Gods: A History of Cruelty and Kindness to Animals* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 87.

³ *History of Hoboken* (Hoboken Board of Trade, 1907), 17.

⁴ This history of the Hoboken & Hudson City Horse Car Railroad and the North Hudson County Railway is derived from Joseph Eid, "Street Cars to the Sky, Part I, The Horse Car

Notes

- Days," *Hoboken History*, No. 3 (Spring 1993), 10-13, 17. Information on the work conditions of streetcar horses is from Alvin H. Harlow, *Henry Bergh, Founder of the A.S.P.C.A.* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1957), 61-75. All later information on the life of Henry Bergh, unless otherwise noted, is also from this source. Legal sources are listed separately.
- ⁵ Information about Thomas McCann, the Hoboken Wagon Elevator, and the Hudson Tunnel Railroad Company was provided by John Gomez, who contributed this material to the Hoboken Historical Museum's 2003 exhibit, *The Tubes: Rails Under the Hudson, 1874 to the Present-day PATH*.
- ⁶ *Hudson County Daily Democrat*, 20 November 1869.
- ⁷ Unless otherwise noted, the firefighters' account of the Great Hoboken Pier Fire is from Ivans B. Applegate, *Twelfth Annual Report of the Chief Engineer of the Hoboken Fire Department*, 1 May 1901.
- ⁸ Norman Brouwer, "The Helen McAllister, ex-Admiral Dewey, and the Great Hoboken Pier Fire of 1900," essay in *Destination Hoboken: The Great Ocean Liners of Hamburg-American & North German Lloyd* (Hoboken, NJ: Hoboken Historical Museum, 2002), 10.
- ⁹ Ray Thompson, *The Feisty Veterinarians of New Jersey: Their First One Hundred Years* (Rockaway, NJ: New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association, 1984). All quotes from Thompson are from this source. Information about early veterinary science is from Thompson or J.F. Smithcors, *The Veterinarian in America, 1625-1975* (Santa Barbara, CA: American Veterinary Publications, 1975).
- ¹⁰ Educational records of Drs. Dixon and Letts from *The Veterinary Medical Register of the State of New Jersey* (Paterson, NJ: Veterinary Medical Association of New Jersey, 1900); Letts's work with the fire department is mentioned in *The Evening News and Hoboken, The Record of the Progress of the Hoboken Evening News, Together With the History of Hoboken, From Its Settlement to the Present Time* (Hoboken, NJ: Hoboken Evening News, 1893), 2.
- ¹¹ Transcription of an original letter from Henry Bergh to Walter Rutherford dated 15 January 1867, from the ASPCA archives. Edward P. Buffet created the transcripts in preparation for a biography of Bergh which he did not live to write. The original letters are not available.
- ¹² David Favre and Vivien Tsang, "The Development of the Anti-Cruelty Laws During the 1800s," *Detroit College of Law Review* (1993). Unless otherwise noted, information on 19th century laws meant to protect animals (and how they have remained essentially unchanged) is derived from this source.
- ¹³ "The Brutalities of the Town," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 28 October 1865.
- ¹⁴ Constitution of the ASPCA, 1866.
- ¹⁵ From transcripts prepared by Buffet, ASPCA archives, noting two letters from 7 December 1866 from "a German lady, of Hoboken, Mrs. Antoinette Otto."
- ¹⁶ From transcripts prepared by Buffet, ASPCA archives, letter from Bergh to Major Z.K. Pangborn, editor *Jersey City Evening Journal*, 13 April 1868, and a letter, same date, from A. Hirst to Bergh reporting on the continued suffering of the horse.
- ¹⁷ *Hudson County Daily Democrat*, 10 July; 4 December; 10 December 1869.
- ¹⁸ Favre and Tsang; final quote from an introduction to anti-cruelty statutes on the Animal Rights Law website of attorneys Gary L. Francione and Anna E. Charlton.
- ¹⁹ Foster Rhea Dulles, *America Learns to Play: A History of Popular Recreation, 1607-1940* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963), 265. Hoboken's velocipede track is listed repeatedly

in the *Hudson County Democrat* during 1869.

²⁰ Details about the Kostelecky family are derived from an interview with Florence (Kostelecky) Quinzel, August 27, 2002.

²¹ Dulles, *America Learns to Play*, 282.

²² Unless otherwise noted, information on Bergh's involvement in founding the NYSPCC is from Harlow, *Henry Bergh, Founder of the A.S.P.C.A.*, 152-154.

²³ *The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 1875-2000*, 125th Anniversary Report, 2000.

²⁴ "Fire Horses Soon To Be Curiosity, Hoboken Expects to Have Department Motorized by August 1," *Hudson Dispatch*, 12 July 1916; "Hoboken adds horsepower to police force," *Jersey Journal*, 12 April 2003.

²⁵ Mark Fogarty, "Fire mascot is buried at fireman's statue," *Jersey Journal*, 20 August 1978.

Food and Clothing

¹ Charles H. Winfield, *Hopoghan Hackingh. Hoboken, A Pleasure Resort for Old New York* (1895), 54.

² "Popular Complaints," *Hudson County Daily Democrat*, 28 June 1869, reprinted from the *New York Herald* article "Summer Resorts" that same day.

³ Foster Rhea Dulles, *America Learns to Play* (1963), 85.

⁴ See Alvin F. Harlow, *Henry Bergh: Founder of the A.S.P.C.A.* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1957), 94. Bergh notes that around 1866 "one car...arrived in Hoboken, loaded with sheep, lambs, and calves [with] fifty-four dead bodies."

⁵ William A. Macy, untitled essay in the *Hoboken Observer*, 18 March 1905.

⁶ For examples of newspaper reports about goats "roaming about the streets by day and by night" and pigs "running at large on Garden Street," see "Popular Complaints," *Hudson County Daily Democrat* 19 June 1869 and "The Celebrated Pig Case," same publication, 17 December 1869. Information about backyard slaughterhouses is from Ray Thompson, *The Feisty Veterinarians of New Jersey* (1984), 104-105. *New Jersey 1850 Federal Census, Free Schedules, Hudson County*, lists 15 butchers in Hoboken, 11 of whom are immigrants from Germany, Prussia, Ireland, and England, in descending order.

⁷ "Letters from the People: The Slaughter Houses," *Hudson County Daily Democrat*, 11 June 1869.

⁸ For reports on the hoof and mouth outbreak that began in North Bergen, New Jersey, see the following 1914 *Hudson Dispatch* articles: "Herd of Diseased Cattle to be Killed Today in North Bergen," 11 November; "Slaughter Diseased Herd," 12 November; "Destroy Pigeon Flock on Weber's Farm, Inspection of County Starts Today," 13 November; "Diseased Cows Found in Five More Dairies, North Hudson Faces Shortage of Milk," 21 November.

⁹ "An Act to Provide for Pasteurization," was passed by the New Jersey Legislature on March 31, 1917; it was amended in 1953, NJSA:4-22.

¹⁰ Robert L. Stevens Fund for Municipal Research in Hoboken, *Sanitary Survey of Hoboken* (Hoboken, NJ, October 1913), 12.

¹¹ G.L. Moller, *The Hoboken of Yesteryear* (1964), 21.

¹² "Foreign Born in Hoboken Listed," *Jersey Observer*, 3 October 1931; *Boyd's Jersey City*

& *Hoboken Directory* (1925-1926); *United States Census* 1980; *United States Census* 2000; Hoboken Community Development Agency, *Hoboken: A Visitor's Guide*, 1977.

¹³ M.H. Dunlop, *Gilded City: Scandal and Sensation in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (New York: William Morrow, 2000), 241-145; Frank M. Chapman, *Autobiography of a Bird Lover* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1933), 38-39.

Spectacle and Sport

¹ Foster Rhea Dulles, *America Learns to Play: A History of Popular Recreation, 1607-1940* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963), 84-85.

² Geoffrey W. Clark, *History of Stevens Institute of Technology* (Jersey City, NJ: Jensen/Daniels Publishers, 2000), 15.

³ Italics in original document, "To the Honorable the Legislative Council and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey, the Memorial of John C. and Robert L. Stevens, proprietors of the Hoboken Ferry," ca. 1826 and "State of New-Jersey. Report of the Committee on the Petition of John C. and R.L. Stevens," ca. 1826; both broadsides in the Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society, Stevens Family Papers. All references to this proposal are derived from these documents.

⁴ Foster Rhea Dulles, *America Learns to Play: A History of Popular Recreation, 1607-1940* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963), 138.

⁵ All information about the Barnum Buffalo Hunt is derived from P.T. Barnum, *The Life of P.T. Barnum, Written by Himself* (New York: Redfield, 1855), 352-356 and "'Mile Square City' Has Colorful History," *Jersey Journal*, 3 February 1967 (Centennial Edition).

⁶ Barnum, *The Life of P.T. Barnum*, 225.

⁷ See: Janet M. Davis, *The Circus Age, Culture & Society Under the American Big Top* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 2-22; 195.

⁸ *Hudson County Daily Democrat*, 22 May 1869; see Davis, *The Circus Age*, 120 and 268 for more on Stratton and Warren.

⁹ The drowning of the John Robinson circus elephant in Hoboken is described on the front pages of the following March 31, 1913 newspapers: "Circus Elephant Drowns, Frightened by Train, 'Lizzie' Jumps Into the North River," *New York Times*; "Huge Elephant On Rampage In Streets; Dies in Hudson," *Jersey Journal*; and "Elephant Escapes and Runs Wild in Hoboken Streets," *Hudson Dispatch*.

¹⁰ "Dead Elephant in Lower Bay," *Staten Island World*, 5 April 1913; "Body of Drowned Elephant Floated to Staten Island," *Hudson Dispatch*, 1 April 1913.

¹¹ Ellis Rawsley, "A Place Called Terrace Park," a short history written in 1992 to commemorate the centennial of the village's incorporation.

¹² "Riding the 'Jeu de Barre' at the Hoboken Riding Club," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 21 April 1866. Additional background from John J. Heaney, *The Bicentennial Comes To Hoboken* (Hoboken, NJ: City of Hoboken, 1976). Heaney is also the source for quotes on the Hoboken Rough Riders.

¹³ Robert R. Stinson, *Hudson County To-Day: Its History, People, Trades, Commerce, Institutions and Industries* (Union, NJ: Hudson Dispatch, n.d., ca. 1915), 111. Information on the fire at Hexamer's is derived from "Fire Destroys the Hexamer Academy," *Hudson*

Dispatch, 8 December 1915; "Hexamer's Riding Academy to Be Rebuilt At Once," *Jersey Journal*, 8 December 1915; "Hexamer Establishes Temporary Quarters," *Hudson Dispatch*, 11 December 1915.

¹⁴ Dulles, *America Learns to Play*, 138. For information on animal fighting in Hudson County see, for example: "Chicken Dispute," *Hudson County Daily Democrat*, 3 May 1869 and "Where Was Bergh," *Hudson County Democrat*, 15 May 1869.

¹⁵ Pat Ford, "Humane society calls Hoboken 'the worst,'" *Jersey Journal*, 30 June 1978.

¹⁶ Transcription of Bergh letter to Rutherford, 14 January 1867; Gerald Carson, *Men, Beasts and Gods: A History of Cruelty and Kindness to Animals* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 83.

¹⁷ From Hoboken Public Library Scrapbooks, an editorial "Cows and Pigs and Chickens Gone—Pigeons Making a Gallant Last Stand," no date and no newspaper citation.

¹⁸ See "Pigeon Owners Must Pay \$1 Fee," *Hudson Dispatch*, 29 December 1950 and "After 30 Years, Pigeons Will Again Be Licensed in Hoboken," *Jersey Journal*, 29 December 1950.

¹⁹ Jack Eckhardt, "Homing Pigeons or Homeless? 'Barbary Coast' Plan Runs Into Unique Problem," *Hudson Dispatch*, 22 May 1968.

²⁰ From *A Walk Through Hoboken with David Hartman and Historian Barry Lewis*, produced by Thirteen/WNET New York, 2003.

Pests and Strays

¹ John C. McLoughlin, *The Animals Among Us: Wildlife in the City* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 4.

² Synopsis of Weed and Dearborn quoted in Jen Hill, *An Exhilaration of Wings*, 111; McLoughlin, *Animals Among Us*, 28.

³ John Bull, *Birds of the New York Area* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 11.

⁴ American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, *Kindness to Animals. A Manual for Use in Schools and Families* (New York: 1893), 46-47; Charles A. Shriner, *The Birds of New Jersey* (Fish and Game Commission of the State of New Jersey, 1896), 15; Henry Van Dyke, *American Ornithology for the Home and School*, as quoted in Hill, 98.

⁵ May Thacher Cooke, *Spread of the European Starling in North America*, U.S. Department of Agriculture Department Circular 336 (Washington, DC: 1925), 1; E.R. Kalmbach, *The European Starling in the United States*, U.S. Department of Agriculture Farmer's Bulletin No. 1571 (Washington, DC: 1928).

⁶ Peter Hallam, "War Declared on Pigeons. Is Hoboken's City Hall For Birds or Citizens?" *Jersey Journal*, 31 August 1967; McLoughlin, 77.

⁷ McLoughlin, 131.

⁸ "Rodent Almost Creates A Panic," *The Observer of Hudson County*, 11 February 1909; G. Gordon Liddy, *Will* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 16, 24; Jeff Kisseloff, "Watergate Spy G. Gordon Liddy: Made in Hoboken," *Hudson Dispatch*, 1 December 1980; "'Foreign Rodents,' Hoboken Mayor Is Called 'Pied Piper' In Reverse," *Jersey Journal*, 17 April 1969.

⁹ "Hoboken gets state fund to fight vermin," *Jersey Journal*, 21 June 1971; "Rats invade Hoboken on 2 fronts," *Jersey Journal*, 6 July 1979; Jim DeRogatis, "Is new housing sending Hoboken to the rats?" *Jersey Journal*, 27 February 1987.

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¹⁰ Hill, 236; John Burroughs, *Squirrels and Other Fur-Bearers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1901), 6.

¹¹ See *Hudson County Daily Democrat* articles: 6 May 1869; 17 May 1869; 24 November 1869.

¹² See *Jersey Journal* articles: "'Mad' Dog, on a Rampage, Shot," 26 October 1911; "'Mad Dog' Crusade in Hoboken," 4 January and 28 February 1912; "S.P.C.A. Captured 5,209 Dogs in 1913...Very Few Rabid, Declares Superintendent McCarthy," 4 February 1914.

¹³ "Dogs Become A Menace While Boards Bicker...Fear Dirty Beasts Are Disease Breeders," *Hudson Dispatch*, 12 July 1916; Naomi Rogers, *Dirt and Disease, Polio Before FDR* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 2-3, 59.

¹⁴ See *Jersey Journal*, 1918: "Mad Dog Scare Here Forces Drastic Action, Mayor Hague Orders All Stray Canines Killed on Sight," 10 June; "Poisoned Meat Balls for the Dogs," 12 June; "113 Dogs Killed on First Day of City's Round Up," 14 June; "The Dog Menace," editorial 14 June; "39 More Dogs Slain On City's Streets Today," 15 June; "Protests Use of Poisoned Meat... Former School Teacher Declares More Humane Way Should Be Found," 17 June; "800 Dog Bites In Year Spur on Dog Killers, Health Officer Tells How Animal Remains Are Used For War Purposes," 24 June.

¹⁵ Thompson, 115.

¹⁶ See *Hudson County Daily Democrat* articles: "Slaughter of Canines," 10 July 1869, "The Public Pound," 28 July 1869, and "Local Brevities," 24 November 1869.

¹⁷ Robert L. Stevens Fund for Municipal Research in Hoboken, *Sanitary Survey of Hoboken*, 1913; description of "Uncle Popeye" and the pound gas chamber is from actor Joe Pantoliano's memoir with David Evanier, *Who's Sorry Now: The True Story of a Stand-Up Guy* (New York: Dutton, 2002), 49-52. For reports on Popeye and the pick-up of live animals from Hoboken's pound, see, in 1968: "Canines Put Extra Bite On Hoboken," *Hudson Dispatch*, 10 April; "May Close Hoboken Pound," *Jersey Journal*, 25 April; "SPCA, Hoboken OK Pact," *Jersey Journal*, 14 May.

¹⁸ "Hoboken trying services of contract dog-catcher," *Jersey Journal*, 28 February 1978 and "Humane society calls Hoboken 'the worst,'" *Jersey Journal*, 30 June 1978.

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¹ All quotes from Thompson, *The Feisty Veterinarians of New Jersey*, 187.

² Dunlop, *Gilded City*, 241-242; Anson D. F. Randolph, *The Autobiography of a Canary Bird* (New York: James Pott, 1866), dedication page.

³ Lohmann, *Radical Passion*, 347-358. Two sources cite different amounts for the size of Assing's bequest to the ASPCA: Harlow in *Henry Bergh* (p.105) puts the amount at \$20,000; Maria Diedrich, *Love Across Color Lines: Otilie Assing & Frederick Douglass* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1999), 379-380, indicates \$13,000 was to be paid to the ASPCA "after [Douglass'] decrease" – though she notes Bergh claimed his organization's money after consultation with Douglass.

⁴ 'Leathernecks' of Second Division Land at Hoboken With Shipload of Mascots," *Hudson Dispatch*, 4 August 1919 and "Some of the Second Division's Men, Their Commander, and Mascots They Bring Home," *New York World*, 4 August 1919. From

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⁵ "Suffering Animals Find Real Friend," *Jersey Journal*, 15 March 1933; "Bessie and Ruby, Pet Dogs, Save Hoboken Woman From Jail," *Jersey Journal*, 10 November 1933.

⁶ William H. Taft, "Ex-cop has a museum in his yard," *Jersey Journal*, 10 December 1977.

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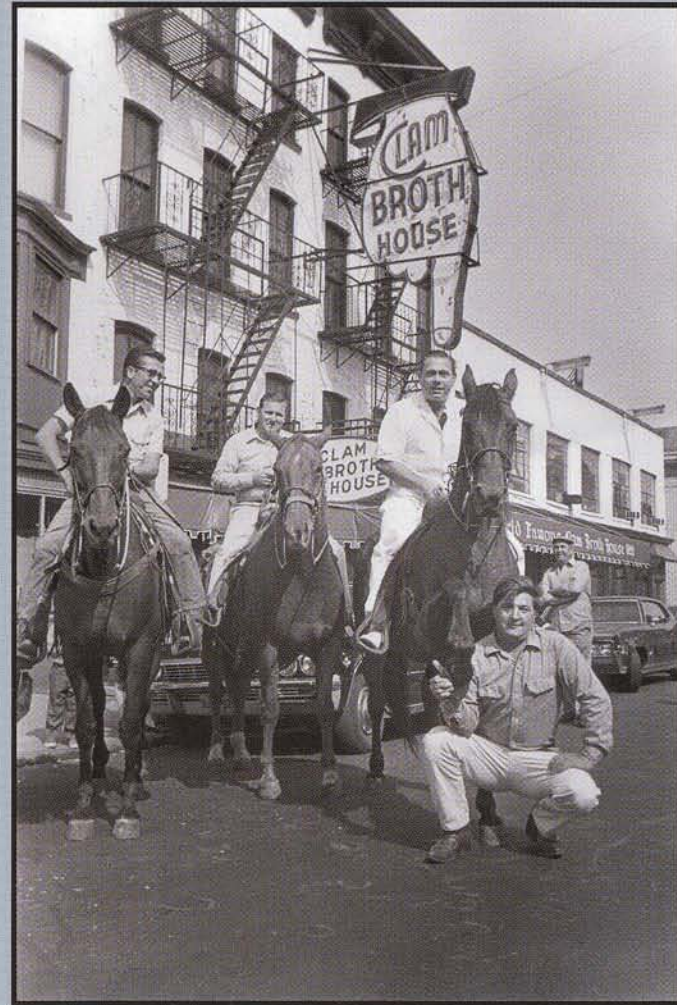
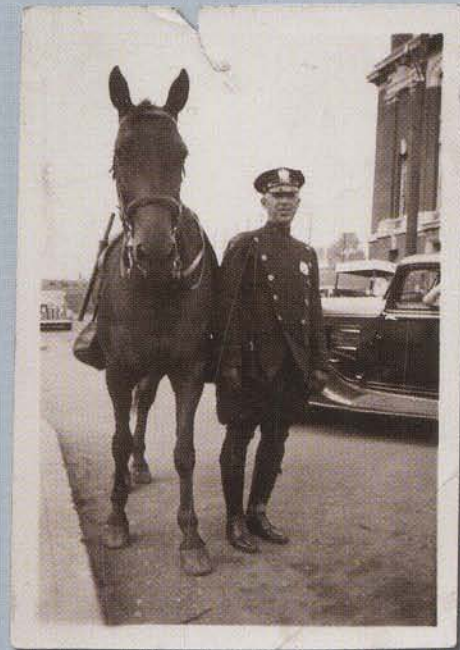
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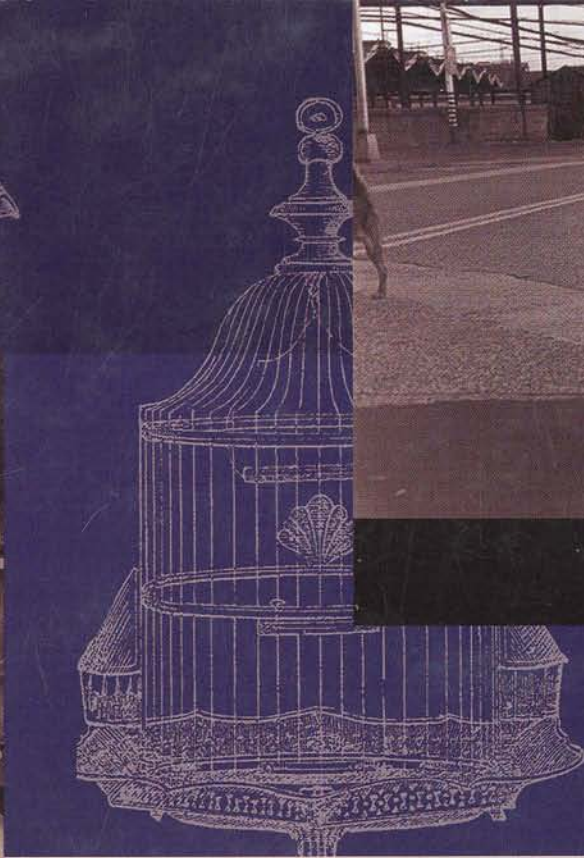
Right: Photograph of a group of horses and riders in front of the Clam Broth House, circa 1970s. Courtesy of photographer Benedict J. Fernandez and Hoboken Almanac.

Below: Unidentified mounted policeman, River Street at Sixth Street in Hoboken. June 1, 1940. Courtesy of Jim Hans.





Companions and Family



Pests and Strays



Spectacle and Sport

