



REVISTA DEL COLEGIO DEL MÉDICOS VETERINARIOS DEL ESTADO LARA

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CONTRIBUTIONS FOR A HISTORY OF THE DOGS AND CATS IN SEATTLE IN THE FIRST MIDDLE OF TWENTIETH CENTURY¹

**Contribuciones para una historia de los perros y gatos en
Seattle en la primera mitad del siglo XX**

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ABSTRACT

This study helps to understand the role of pets in modern cities and the important part that those animals played in their family lives affronted to cultural transformation and changes in social structure and that they saw to arise relationships profoundly shaped and transformed by the social, economic, and cultural context of changing urban homes.

In the early twentieth century, cats and dogs bridged human distinctions between pet and livestock. Initially seen as servants and friends, they were part of households, but also typically had working roles which assured their urban role, as much as individual connections with humans. Eventually, dogs and cat also be viewed as companion and like children by persons that hadn't had sons own. But in families that have children pets were not only a source of joy to them, a playmate, but of moral growth, a possibility to have a moral lesson of kindness.

Increasingly beloved as more than property by their owners, dogs and cats were no longer seen as less than property in the eyes of the laws. Pets also participated in the

¹ Extract of "**Cows in the Commons, Dogs on the Lawn: A History of Animals in Seattle**", Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the History Program of University of Washington, 2010.

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mass consumer culture that transformed the home and the city more broadly in the twentieth century; also appeared pet shops, animal defenders groups and a small industry and market of animal breeders.

These new relations with cats and dogs transformed the entire city, but especially white middle-class neighborhoods because real-estate developers placed legal racial restrictions and class-based animal restriction based in “no poultry and no animals other than household pets”. Thus working-class and middle-income neighborhoods – whether white or non-white – where people chose to raise animals for food, were disappearing.

A personal, “individual”, relationship with dogs, cats, and birds fit into the modern, middle-class city – a connection based on companionship and love – while dependence on livestock for food or income did not.

Such legal instruments expressed and reinforced a view of the respectability of the white middle-class that was defined, in part, by the absence of cattle and the presence of pets, which ultimately helped remodel all cities in the twentieth century.

RESUMEN

Este estudio ayuda a entender el papel de los animales domésticos en las ciudades modernas y el importante papel que jugaron los animales en las vidas de sus familias enfrentadas a la transformación cultural y a los cambios en la estructura social y que vieron surgir relaciones profundamente formadas y transformadas por el desarrollo social, económico y el contexto cultural de hogares urbanos cambiantes.

En los primeros años del siglo XX, gatos y perros crearon puentes en las distinciones humanas entre mascotas y ganado. Inicialmente vistos como siervos y amigos, no solo eran parte de los hogares, sino también por lo general tenían roles de trabajo que aseguraron su papel urbano, tanto como las conexiones individuales con los seres humanos. Con el tiempo, los perros y los gatos también fueron vistos como compañeros y como niños por parte de personas que no habían tenido sus propios hijos. Pero en las familias que tienen niños, las mascotas no sólo eran una fuente de alegría para ellos, un compañero de juegos, sino también una fuente de crecimiento moral, una posibilidad de tener una lección moral de la bondad.

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Cada vez más amados como algo más que una propiedad para sus dueños, los perros y los gatos ya no fueron vistos como menos que una propiedad a los ojos de las leyes. Las mascotas también participaron en la cultura de consumo de masas que transformó al hogar y la ciudad de manera más amplia en el siglo XX; también aparecieron las tiendas de mascotas, los grupos defensores de animales y la pequeña industria y mercado de los criadores de animales.

Estas nuevas relaciones con los gatos y los perros transformaron toda la ciudad, pero especialmente los barrios blancos de clase media, debido a que los desarrolladores de bienes raíces colocaron restricciones raciales y de clase basadas en la restricción de animales siguiendo la premisa de "ningún ave de corral y ningún otro animal que no sean animales de compañía". Así, los barrios de clase obrera y de ingresos medios - fueran blancos o no blancos - donde la gente optaba por la cría de animales para su alimentación, fueron desapareciendo.

Una relación personal, "individual", con los perros, gatos y aves se ajustó a lo moderno, a la ciudad de clase media - una conexión basada en el compañerismo y el amor -; mientras que la dependencia del ganado para alimentos o para generar ingresos no logró tal ajuste.

Tales instrumentos jurídicos expresaron y reforzaron una visión de respetabilidad de la clase media blanca definida, en parte, por la ausencia de ganado y la presencia de animales domésticos, misma que ayudó finalmente a remodelar las ciudades en el siglo XX.

From Servants to Children in the Twentieth-Century Home

Caesar, a large German Shepherd, lived in the Seward Park neighborhood of southern Seattle in the 1940s. While he had a home with the Redfield family, his daily wanderings took him far beyond the confines of his humans' yard. In the dark of the evening, he regularly travelled unescorted the three blocks from the house to meet Mrs. Redfield and her daughter as they got off the bus and to accompany them down a treacherous trail back home. More than once, he journeyed to the thickly wooded Seward Park at night and discovered lost children whom he safely brought back to their parents, so his owners reported. He likely had many other haunts well known to his owners and others in the neighborhood, and many other habits that endeared him to his owners, who were sufficiently moved by his death to place a note in a Seattle pet

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magazine about his remarkable life.²

Caesar was one of thousands of dogs that roamed city neighborhoods freely. What we might term a “dog commons” existed where dogs by the thousands wandered the streets, legally if they had a license.³ This system was already under attack in the years that Caesar began patrolling Seward Park. In addition to the laudable activities that dogs engaged in, they urinated and defecated on lawns, dug up flowers and shrubs; they frightened and bit people; they chased cars and copulated in public view. While many celebrated dogs’ role as they wandered neighborhoods; many others condemned it. Seattle continued to grow in the middle decades of the century – especially during World War II – from 365,583 inhabitants in 1930, to 368,302 in 1940, and to 467,591 in 1950. Like many large cities, it engaged in a lengthy debate from the 1930s to the 1950s about how (or whether) to fit dogs into the changing city.

As the century progressed, more people came to associate loose dogs with the opposite of urban respectability. Dogs’ attacks on the flowers, lawns, and gardens of middle-class homes led people to call for leash laws. But it was more than material depredations that bothered critics: loose dogs also stirred up cultural associations of backwardness and of Indigenous Seattle. Depending on what dog was where, urban dogs could take on very different meanings. The pampered pure-breed on its owner’s lawn bespoke middle-class respectability. The independent mutt wandering far from home marked a neighborhood as rural and poor.

Paired with the trend toward greater control was a move toward greater affection for dogs and cats. Throughout the century, their numbers grew, as did humans’ bond of affection for them.⁴ People went from seeing pets as loyal servants to seeing them as beloved children.⁵ Caesar’s story fits into this trend, as much as it does into the narrative of declining dog freedom. Pet-owners were increasingly willing to

² *American Dog and Pet Magazine*, April 1941, 9.

³ Donna Haraway refers to this space as a “commons” in *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 59, 128.

⁴ Sources: “Dog and Cats Must Have New Tags by Jan. 15,” *ST*, January 5, 1935; *American Dog and Pet Magazine*, June 1940, p. 7; “Health authorities advocate action to curb rabies spread,” *ST*, May 13, 1951; Sam R. Sperry, “Changes in animal laws urged,” *ST*, Sept. 30, 1971; 2006: Casey McNerthney, “Increased patrols look for pet license scofflaws,” *SPI*, December 27, 2006; “Gregg Campaign on in all of its fury,” *ST*, May 1, 1906, p. 5. On national population trends, see Jordan Curnutt, *Animals and the Law: A Sourcebook* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC CLIO, 2001), 115; Michael Schaffer, *One Nation Under Dog: Adventures in the New World of Prozac-Popping Puppies, Dog-Park Politics, and Organic Pet Food* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), 33; Elizabeth A. Clancy and Andrew N. Rowan, “Companion Animal Demographics in the United States: A Historical Perspective,” in *The State of Animals in 2003*, ed. D. J. Salem and A. N. Rowan. (Washington, D.C.: Humane Society Press, 2004), 9-26.

⁵ Schaffer, *One Nation Under Dog*, 222, 237.

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record and commemorate the important part that animals played in their family lives, as illustrated when Caesar's family contacted a local magazine about their late beloved pup. Still, the shift did not affect all Seattleites equally. While the human-pet bond took on greater importance for city people broadly, white middle-class women were in the forefront of this transformation, as evidenced by their preponderance among the animal rescue groups that began to proliferate in the last third of the twentieth century.

While market forces increasingly restricted livestock to farms governed by the relatively simple rule of profit, a more complex set of forces focused on the home transformed the lives of cats and dogs. The changing social structure of the home, the spread of a middle-class ideal of kindness, and the embrace of a consumer mass culture all contributed to these transformations. All these changes would have been meaningless without the beauty, grace, playfulness, affection, and, above all tameness, that dogs and cats possess. If they always fled humans or attacked humans viciously, they would not be viewed as pets. Yet the nature of dogs and cats – a nature that humans and animals have co-created over thousands of years of domestication – does not require a specific relationship with them. Attitudes toward these animals are historically contingent. Through the twentieth century, the social makeup of the household – the set of human and nonhuman animals that inhabited it – changed dramatically. In the first two thirds of the century, livestock left the household, eliminating the most profound example of utilitarian relations with animals. In the final third of the century, fewer households had children. Both trends likely affected attitudes toward cats and dogs. Affection for pets was no longer tempered by any comparison with backyard chickens destined for slaughter. It became easier to see pets as children when fewer human children were around. Institutions such as humane societies promoted an ethic of kindness that gained increasing hold. Rising incomes made possible greater affection toward cats and dogs, but did not require it. However, entrepreneurs such as veterinarians, pet stores, pet food companies, and dog breeders all took advantage of this growing affection, while helping to promote it as well. Dogs and cats are social others: friends, companions, and servants. Yet these relationships are profoundly shaped and transformed by the social, economic, and cultural context of changing urban homes.

The fact that some paired increasing affection with increasing control may seem a paradox. Yet as Yi-Fu Tuan has argued, in pet-keeping dominance and affection are

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but two sides of the coin of human dominion.⁶ Benevolence toward and control over animals helped city people, especially the white middle class, draw lines between their neighborhoods and other neighborhoods, between themselves and other people. In this, species and place went together to mark respectability. As letters to the city council made clear, it was important to many Seattleites that their city not seem like the country and that it seem to be progressing toward a modern, better future. Dogs on the lawn – not cows on the lawn, not dogs in the streets – told some Seattleites that they were urban and modern.

Adults' Servants and Children's Playmates

In the early twentieth century, cats and dogs bridged human distinctions between pet and livestock. Seen as servants and friends, they were part of households, but also typically had working roles. While pigs', cattle's, and chicken's work (producing meat, milk, and eggs) could be easily exported to the country, the work of protecting property could not. It was both this working role and people's affection for cats and dogs that gave them a relatively secure urban home, even as livestock was eliminated. Cats protected food in houses, warehouses, and groceries by killing mice and rats. Dogs also commonly served to guard homes and businesses from theft.⁷ For instance, during a 1920 crime wave, some eighty people a day called the animal pound asking if any dogs were available, with bulldogs the most popular breed. Failing to find their desired breed, many people were willing to settle for "any kind of old dog that will bark when he's supposed to."⁸ Dogs worked with hunters, as well. At least 3,500 families owned bird dogs in the 1930s and waited anxiously for hunting season to begin so they could take their dogs to the fields – this in a city with some twenty thousand dogs in all.⁹ Dogs and cats were often beloved; yet they typically worked.

Dogs' reputation as a species – that they were "man's best friend" – assured their urban role, as much as individual connections with humans. When Seattleites began debating leash laws in the 1930s, many argued that dogs as a group had earned their freedom (not to be leashed) through service. One woman noted that dogs "did valiant service in the war [World War I], and have served the human race back as far as

⁶ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

⁷ Letter from Mrs. Glenn Armstrong, filed March 9, 1936, CF 150033, SMA; letter from Norman M. Littell, dated March 16, 1936, CF 150202, SMA. The following abbreviations are used in this chapter: CF for Comptroller's File; SMA for Seattle Municipal Archives; *SPI* for *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*; and *ST* for *Seattle Times*.

⁸ "Every Seattle Dog Has His Day," *ST*, January 7, 1920.

⁹ "Bird Dogs Must be Inoculated," *ST*, September 28, 1932.

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history extends.”¹⁰ The owner of a Irish terrier named “Pat” commented that “a dog is the best friend of mankind, gaurd [sic] and protector, would give his life serving his master.”¹¹ One woman argued that dogs had earned their freedom as a “faithful animal who thru the ages has stood by the human race in peace and war.”¹² Even in letters that made little mention of any real work, a discourse of service bolstered opinions of dogs.

Cats too were prized for their work. One woman ventured the opinion in the 1930s that “[d]ogs are chiefly kept as pets, while cats besides as pets, are mainly kept to kill or keep away mice and rats.”¹³ Indeed, social critic Thorstein Veblen had argued that to the upper class in the late nineteenth century, “The cat is less reputable than [dogs and fast horses], because she is less wasteful; she may even serve a useful end.”¹⁴ The transformation of cats’ urban role has been even more dramatic than that of dogs. Since they first associated themselves with humans some four thousand years ago, they have lived so independently that some argue they were not truly domesticated until the last century and a half – the time when humans finally began to control their breeding. Cats appeared only rarely in early stories of the town. Many of them likely went about their work, while living semi-feral in sheds and barns. Other cats found warmer places to sleep in kitchens and children’s beds, although many people still found it unsanitary for cats to spend much time within houses. They worried that cats in beds would suffocate sleepers, especially children. Gradually, however, people began to see it as abnormal that cats wander the city, as self-reliant hunters and scavengers. Writing in 1926, one woman bemoaned cats deserted by their owners as “poor waifs slinking around in dismal places, eking out a miserable living” – a novel and negative view of the very self-reliant role as mousers that cats had long filled in the city.¹⁵ Largely ignored in the nineteenth century, cats came to rival (if not match) dogs in humans’ affection in the twentieth century.¹⁶

While adults typically saw dogs and cats as servants a century ago, they could

¹⁰ Letter from Josephine Commer and others, filed 1936, CF 152105, SMA.

¹¹ Letter filed January 20, 1936, CF 149486, SMA.

¹² Letter filed December 9, 1935, CF 148957, SMA.

¹³ Letter dated October 27, 1935, CF 148564; letter dated June 15, 1939, CF 162903; letter dated April 16, 1942, CF 173684; letter filed April 1, 1945, CF 188455; letter filed November 12, 1946, CF 194218, SMA.

¹⁴ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 140 (originally published 1899).

¹⁵ “Cruelty to Cats” [letter from Mary Lee], *ST*, March 11, 1926.

¹⁶ Katherine C. Grier, *Pets in America: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 37. Surveys of pet owners continue to show that humans generally report a stronger emotional bond to their dogs than they do to their cats (Penny L. Bernstein, “The Human-Cat Relationship,” in *The Welfare of Cats*, ed. I. Rochlitz [Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2005], 57-59).

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also be viewed as children. That unusual status, however, might require some justification, as in the story of one older man. “George Richardson,” the *Seattle Times* reported in 1906, “who is past 70 years old, and had a dog upon which he lavished affection, is inconsolable over the loss of his pet by poison. The dog has been his companion for years and as he had no children upon whom to center his love he gave it all to his dumb friend.”¹⁷ The writer did not criticize the man for loving his dog like a child. But the explanation made clear the dog was a second-rate substitute.

Alongside adults’ view of cats and dogs as loyal servants was children’s view of them as playmates, prized for their quirky personalities. Marie Walker wrote the *Post-Intelligencer’s* children’s club to tell of her cat who was seen licking its paw in order to wash Marie’s face as she slept.¹⁸ Paul Alexander wrote in about his “funny cat” that sat in the window sill to watch him eat and stuck its tongue out at him, whenever he looked at it.¹⁹ In Seattle, when the city council debated dogs in public space, petitioners referred repeatedly to the special connection between children and pets. People wondered how children could play with their dogs, if they had to lead them through the neighborhood on leashes. Most proponents of dog freedom seemed to accept the complaint of one petitioner’s children: “Mother we cant have any fun if we have to lead our dog around” on a leash.²⁰ Not only had dogs earned their freedom, it was essential for children’s play.

By the 1930s, some even viewed dogs as a required part of childhood. Having a dog was “the heritage of all normal youngsters,” one journalist wrote in 1936.²¹ A local dog magazine argued that “[e]very normal family at some time has given thought to buying a puppy.”²² Countering the argument that poor people who owned dogs had skewed priorities, one woman asserted that they were “just real folks,” demonstrated by the fact that they “love their children and the children love their pets.”²³ Although not everybody loved dogs, many felt that “normal” youngsters in families of “real folks” ought to have a dog.

Animals were not only a source of joy to children, but of moral growth, a fact

¹⁷ “Humane Society is After Dog Poisoner,” *ST*, September 23, 1906.

¹⁸ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer Magazine*, November 4, 1917, 6.

¹⁹ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer Magazine*, May 18, 1918, 7.

²⁰ Letter from Gladys Hourigan, January 19, 1936, CF 149002, SMA; see also letter from Hanna Roüvik(?) Gaerisch, December 1, 1935, CF 148957; letter from Gladys Hourigan, January 19, 1936, CF 149002.

²¹ “Putting Docs [sic] on the Spot,” *Journal of Commerce*, February 18, 1936.

²² *American Dog and Pet Magazine*, May 1940, inside cover.

²³ Letter from Mrs. W. J. Byrne, December 31, 1936, CF 153613, SMA.

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that women were especially likely to point out. This viewpoint dated back to the “domestic ethic of kindness,” elaborated in middle-class homes in the nineteenth century. Yet the moral lesson of kindness may have taken on even greater importance as livestock was eliminated from middle-class homes through the early twentieth century and children were no longer expected to slaughter some of the animals they took care of. As one woman wrote, children “learn unselfishness and thoughtfulness from their care.”²⁴ Another woman testified, “My own child is gradually, through the possession of a dog of his own, overcoming a decided strain of cruelty in his nature, and this one thing alone is repeated in thousands of families.”²⁵ Pets were a vital part of children’s moral education, many argued. One petitioner even made the startling claim that “no youngster that ever had a pet in his boyhood ever committed a murder.”²⁶ For the home to achieve its goals of helping children become responsible adults, pets were crucial.

The roles of adults’ servant and children’s pet were not neatly separated, but bridged by many individual dogs. As newspaper ads revealed, the work of watch-dog could easily blend with the role as children’s pet. “Pedigreed English bull terrier puppies ... watchdog, bird dog, good, kind; companion for children and will protect them,” read one ad.²⁷ “Police Dog puppies. The most intelligent and faithful companion, excellent as watchdog and ideal as pet for children,” proclaimed another.²⁸ Cats’ working role was so important that mouser was virtually a synonym for cat in the early twentieth century. Yet this did not keep children from lavishing affection on the working animal who shared their homes and yards. People loved their cats and dogs in the early twentieth century; yet they also had work for them to do.

Consumers, Symbols, and Friends

The men who worked collecting stray dogs and cats in the early twentieth century often did not endear themselves to the citizens they served. It was their job to bring in dogs that did not have a metal tag indicating their owner had bought a license – \$1.00 for males, \$2.50 for females. In 1906, for example, Seattle had some five thousand dogs, of which only 1,300 were licensed; so the dog-catchers had plenty to do. The poundmaster and his workforce operated within the police department doing a

²⁴ Letter from Mrs. Oakley, January 15, 1936, CF 149487.

²⁵ Letter from N. C. Travis, January 6, 1935, CF 149315.

²⁶ Letter filed November 21, 1946, CF 194218, SMA.

²⁷ *ST*, November 15, 1920, 21.

²⁸ *ST*, May 1, 1921, 36; *see also ST*, March 2, 1921, 65; *ST*, May 4, 1925, 24; *ST*, November 14, 1925.

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job that was often dangerous and unpleasant, a fact which explains why the white-dominated city government had accorded these jobs primarily to African Americans. Poundmaster Henry Gregg hitched up his bright red horse-drawn wagon, with separate compartments for large dogs and small dogs, “steel[ed] his heart against the tearful pleas of women and children and trot[ted] off unlicensed dogs to the pound.” Once these animals arrived at the pound, most of them were euthanized. In 1913, for instance, some three thousand dogs were killed at the pound. Gregg may have loved cats and dogs as much as anyone. But the image of his work that emerged in press articles focused more on control than concern.²⁹ In the years to come, humane reformers turned their attention to the way the pound was run.

In the 1920s, three trends showed that cats and dogs were becoming the preeminent urban animals. First, they were increasingly commodities, as well as reasons for consumerism. Second, white middle-class neighborhoods began to ban all livestock, including chickens, and to define pets as the only permissible domestic animals. Third, the animal pound came under the management of the Humane Society – part of a gradual transformation of the pound from a police authority focused on livestock to a humanitarian authority focused on pets. These economic, social, and attitudinal shifts all worked together to transform the lives of cats and dogs. The presence of pets and the absence of livestock were particularly important to the white middle class’s sense of who they were, as evidenced by their prominent role in fostering all three of these trends.

Ironically, as people went from seeing dogs and cats as servants to seeing them as children, these animals also become increasingly commodified. In a certain sense, dogs were livestock to breeders and pet-store owners; but they became pets the moment they were purchased.³⁰ Businesses and newspapers, in fact, called them “pet stock,” perfectly capturing their in-between status. People have always acquired many dogs and most cats outside the formal marketplace: casually from neighbors in the early twentieth century, increasingly from animal shelters and rescue groups in the late twentieth century. Yet a market in dogs (and to some extent cats) came into its own in the 1910s and 1920s. By the mid-1910s, the *Seattle Times* had a separate classified section devoted to “pet stock,” primarily dogs, but also cats, canaries, and rabbits. This

²⁹ “Gregg Promises a Whirlwind Campaign,” *ST*, April 24, 1907; “Gregg Campaign on in All its Fury,” *ST*, May 1, 1906; “Dog Catcher in Hard Luck,” *ST*, May 2, 1907; City of Seattle, “Report of the Department of Health and Sanitation,” 1914. See also “The Dog Catcher’s Victims,” *SPI*, August 20, 1899.

³⁰ Grier, *Pets in America*, 234.

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section of classified ads was still dwarfed by the section for “poultry” and for “livestock” (mostly horses and cows, but also pigs and goats). But by the mid-1920s, the classified section indicates that a robust trade in dogs had developed, at least among the middle class that could afford purebred animals. The issue of the *Seattle Times* for September 20, 1925, lists seventeen ads for poultry, twenty-three for livestock, and sixty-nine for pet stock. Almost all the pets advertised were dogs, with only seven ads for cats (two offering them for free) and five for birds. People offered dogs for sale and for stud service from a wide range of breeds, almost all of them well adapted to hunting or guarding: German police dog, Russian wolf hound, pointer, water spaniel, cocker spaniel, Springer spaniel, Airedale, English setter, Llewlyn setter, Chesapeake Bay, spitz, English bulldog, French bulldog, fox terrier, Boston terrier, Irish terrier, Dobermann pinscher, pit bull, collie, bear hound, “bird dog,” Pomeranian, and Chihuahua.³¹ This small-scale cottage industry in breeding animals resulted from a growing desire for purebred dogs and the growing presence of those dogs, no doubt, contributed in turn to the desire for these animals.³²

Increasingly beloved as more than property by their owners, dogs and cats were no longer seen as less than property in the eyes of the laws. Dogs had their defenders in earlier centuries, even though many saw them as less valuable than livestock. An English commentator of the sixteenth century (when cattle was a synonym for livestock) pleaded for instance: “The Dogge (though the Lawyer alloweth him not in the number of cattle) and though he yeeldes of himself no profited, yet is he...to be esteemed.”³³ Still it was only after the 1920s, as pet numbers and human affection for them grew, that U.S. courts began to consider dogs as personal property, just like other domestic animals.³⁴

Pets participated in the mass consumer culture that transformed the home and the city more broadly in the twentieth century. Increasingly commodities, they became, along with other inhabitants of middle-class homes, consumers as well. As historian Catherine Grier has described, pet stores did a lively trade in birds, fish, reptiles, and various small mammals in the early twentieth century.³⁵ The names of Seattle’s pet shops at mid-century give some idea of the diversity of creatures kept as pets: Barnier’s

³¹ “Pet Stock,” *ST*, September 20, 1925.

³² Grier, *Pets in America*, 233, 238; CF 150582, filed April 17, 1936; CF 156350, filed August 25, 1937; CF 162636, filed May 19, 1939; CF 37439, filed July 26, 1909.

³³ B. Googe, Heresbach’s *Husb.* (1586), quoted in OED entry for “cattle.”

³⁴ Curnutt, *Animals and the Law*, 114-15.

³⁵ Grier, *Pets in America*, 231-71.

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Pet Shop, the Bird House, Canine Beauty Shop & Pet Supply, Clough's Certified Aviaries, Dillaway's Aquarium & Pet Shop, Gooch's Petland, Harwich's Dr Pet Service, Jack's Aquary & Hobby Shop, Katnip Tree Co, and Orpheum Pet Shop.³⁶ The list, however, likely overemphasizes the importance of birds and fish, since the popular species of these animals had to be acquired from pet stores, while many could acquire kittens or puppies from neighbors. As children's letters to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer's* Wide Awake Club reveal, other animals rarely rivaled cats and dogs in pet-owners' affections – the animals that are the focus of this discussion. As cats' and dogs' role changed, their numbers increased as well. Licensing numbers offer little clue to population, since they fluctuate wildly depending on how carefully the city enforces these laws. Estimates of dog populations are perhaps no better. They do, however, fit the trend scholars have noted nationally: increasing pet populations throughout the century. Based on various estimates from Seattle city officials, the number of dogs in the city increased much more rapidly than the human population: from 5,000 dogs in 1906 to 20,000 in 1935 to 50,000 in 1951 to 125,000 in 2001. These numbers represent a steadily declining ratio of humans per dog: from 34 in 1906 to 18 in 1935 to 9 in 1951 and to 4.5 in 2001.³⁷ Fewer officials ventured to estimate the number of cats. But the number of cats, especially tame cats in households, likely increased as well.

These new relations with cats and dogs transformed the entire city, but especially white middle-class neighborhoods. As Seattle grew rapidly in the early years of the twentieth century, it became more segregated along lines of class and race. The city's total human population increased from 81,000 in 1900 to 238,000 in 1910 to 366,000 in 1930. As new middle-class neighborhoods were built in the 1920s, a new form of segregation emerged: restrictive covenants. These new neighborhoods had been developed on explicitly racist lines with restrictive covenants excluding Asians and African Americans. White real-estate developers added a class-based set of exclusions to these racist covenants by outlawing livestock in these neighborhoods as well, and therefore poor whites who might own them as an economic strategy. These legal instruments expressed and reinforced a vision of white middle-class

³⁶ Polk's City Directory, 1951.

³⁷ "Dog and Cats Must Have New Tags by Jan. 15," *ST*, Jan. 5, 1935 (SPL Clipping file A75); *American Dog and Pet Magazine*, June 1940, p. 7; "Health authorities advocate action to curb rabies spread," *ST*, May 13, 1951; Sam R. Sperry, "Changes in animal laws urged," *ST*, September 30, 1971; Casey McNerthney, "Increased patrols look for pet license scofflaws," *SPI*, December 27, 2006; "Gregg Campaign on in all of its fury," *ST*, May 1, 1906, p. 5. On national population trends, see *Animals and the Law*, 115; Schaffer, *One Nation Under Dog*, 33; Elizabeth A. Clancy and Andrew N. Rowan, "Companion Animal Demographies in the United States: A Historical Perspective," in *The State of Animals in 2003*, ed. D. J. Salem and A. N. Rowan. (Washington, D.C.: Humane Society Press, 2004), 9-26.

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respectability defined, in part, by the absence of livestock and the presence of pets.

Throughout the city, real-estate developers placed racial restrictions and class-based animal restrictions side by side in restrictive covenants. A deed for Lakeridge from 1931 stated in its second clause that “no poultry and no animals other than household pets [...] shall be kept,” while the third clause stated the property could never be conveyed “to any person not of the White race,” nor could non-whites live there “except a domestic servant actually employed by a White occupant of such building.”³⁸ A deed from Beacon Hill in 1927 specified in its fifth clause that “No swine shall be kept on said premises,” while the sixth clause forbade sale of the property to “any person other than of the Caucasian race.”³⁹ A deed for a house in Magnolia stated in its third clause there should be “no chickens or other fowls, or animals, except individual household pets,” while its subsequent clause barred “persons of Asiatic, African or Negro blood,” except domestic servants.⁴⁰ A property on Interbay called for “no cows, hogs, goats or similar live stock ... and no fowl on a commercial basis,” while the preceding clause barred sale to “any person other than one of the White or Caucasian race.”⁴¹

Similar restrictions soon shaped national policies. In 1938, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) underwriting guidelines warned against providing loans in neighborhoods lacking restrictive covenants with a “prohibition of occupancy of properties except by the race for which they are intended” and a “prohibition of nuisances or undesirable buildings such as stables, pig pens, temporary dwellings, and high fences.” The 1955 guidelines were similar, although the language about race had become more coded, and the list of inappropriate animals extended to include chickens and dog-breeding operations. They warned about loans in neighborhoods where “the areas adjacent to the immediate neighborhood are occupied by a user group dissimilar to the typical occupants of the subject neighborhood,” as well as neighborhoods with “offensive noises, odors and unsightly neighborhood features such as stables, pigsties, chicken yards, and kennels.”⁴² By the 1950s, even chickens were seen as a threat to property values.

³⁸ Deed dated March 4, 1931, Record of Deeds, King County Courthouse.

³⁹ Deed dated November 18, 1927, Record of Deeds, King County Courthouse.

⁴⁰ Deed dated July 18, 1931, Record of Deeds, King County Courthouse.

⁴¹ Deed dated September 30, 1931, Record of Deeds, King County Courthouse

⁴² Federal Housing Administration, *Underwriting Manual: Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act* (Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1938), sections 935, 980(3), and 1380(2); Federal Housing Administration, *Underwriting Manual: Underwriting Analysis under Title II, Section 203* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Housing Administration, 1955), sections 1316(7) and 1320(2).

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Both restrictive covenants and FHA guidelines defined the exclusions that marked progress and respectability for many white middle-class Americans. These exclusions included the well-known racial exclusions that precluded people of color from owning homes in these neighborhoods. But considerations of class shaped these neighborhoods as well. Anti-livestock clauses precluded working-class and middle-income people – whether white or non-white – who chose to raise animals for food. In other words, class was a matter of culture, as well as income and race. Housing prices would likely have prevented the poor from living in many of these neighborhoods; but the livestock rules excluded those with moderate wealth who chose to keep productive livestock at home.

Home-owners feared the crowing roosters or clucking hens would disturb their comfort and lower property values in a way that barking dogs did not. Given prevailing attitudes, they likely did. The covenants did not exclude animals based on their size, or purely based on species: they often did not specify all the species that were excluded and those that were permitted. Rather, they created exclusions based on the type of relationship with animals – “household pets” were acceptable, while “live stock” was excluded. One of the most common phrasings named only one species: “No chicken, or other fowls, or animals, except individual household pets” were allowed.⁴³ A personal, “individual” relationship with dogs, cats, and birds fit into the modern, middle-class city – a connection based on companionship and love – while dependence on livestock for food or income did not.

By blending messages of humanitarianism, efficiency, and control, the Humane Society succeeded in gaining control of the animal pound in the 1920s. While much about the human-animal borderlands is contentious (do animals have souls? do they reason? are they conscious?), the strongest argument of humane advocates, dating back to Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century, has been that at the very least animals, like humans, do suffer.⁴⁴ Increasingly, animal advocates, especially women, invoked this argument.

As early as 1902, the Humane Society had lobbied to take over the animal pounds.⁴⁵ The society made clear that it viewed cats and dogs as the most important

⁴³ Deed dated Oct. 20, 1928, Record of Deeds, King County Courthouse.

⁴⁴ James Serpell, *In the Company of Animals: A Study of Human-Animal Relationships* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 160-62; Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 176.

⁴⁵ “A Humane Movement,” *ST*, March 17, 1902; “Humane Society Report,” *ST*, April 8, 1902; “Special Meeting Tonight,” *ST*, May

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urban animals – an assessment that did not comport at all with the experience of residents of outlying neighborhoods, who were more concerned about loose livestock. As early as 1912, citizens filed a petition with over two hundred signatures favoring Humane Society control. It called for “placing the control of dumb animals where it belongs, with an institution founded on humanitarian principles,” rather than with the Police Department.⁴⁶ As animal advocates often did, they were careful to refer to animals as “dumb”: that is, lacking speech. Since animals were voiceless, it was reformers’ duty to speak for them.

Although participants did not evoke race, gender, and class specifically in debates over the pound, these identities all played some role in the transfer. The transfer would be from a public agency dedicated to law enforcement to a private organization dedicated to reducing animal suffering. It also placed the dog pound, most of whose employees were African American men, under an organization where white women had some of the most active roles. The transfer was part of a growing feminization of voices calling for kindness toward animals.⁴⁷

Although Humane Society advocates apparently made no mention of race in their campaign, the public image of African American dog-catchers in press coverage as unsympathetic to animals’ plight suggests that racial attitudes, as well, may have played a role in the transfer.⁴⁸ Like the Humane Society itself, those 1912 petitioners had a decidedly middle- and upper-class bent. Physicians, department store owners, jewelers, real-estate men, music teachers, officer workers and the like predominated, with only a few workers voicing their support.⁴⁹ The move to place the pound under Humane Society management fit within broader progressive aspirations for greater efficiency and the reform of other institutions like the workplace and prisons. The Humane Society argued it would operate the pound at a savings to the city and in a more humane manner that would reduce animal suffering and disease. In this, the city was following the example of other major cities such as Spokane, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.⁵⁰ Of the

24, 1904.

⁴⁶ Petition filed August 15, 1912, CF 48891; letter filed August 7, 1912, CF 48761, SMA.

⁴⁷ A list of life-time members of the Humane Society in 1925 revealed 16 women, 6 men and one organization. “New Shelter for Animals Assured,” *ST*, February 3, 1925.

⁴⁸ “Gregg Campaign on in All its Fury,” *ST*, May 1, 1906; “Open Season Here for H. Gregg,” *ST*, March 31, 1909; “War to Begin on Unlicensed Dogs,” *ST*, April 24, 1907.

⁴⁹ Dog Petition Database, in author’s possession.

⁵⁰ Letter from Charles M. Farrer, September 30 1919, CF 74892; letter dated September 7, 1921, CF 82560; “Humane Society to Run Pound?,” *ST*, March 5, 1922.

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pound then run by the Police Department, reformers said, “It is a place worthy of the dark ages and is allowed to exist only because the unfortunates there cannot tell their woes.” The society saw the pound as especially dangerous for its role in spreading rabies and other diseases. Small animals, it said, “are piled in there to fight and bite and spread any disease that may be among them.”⁵¹ Humane Society experts, by contrast, would take a “reasonable, sensible and scientific” approach to the disease. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the society hoped to reduce the suffering of animals. It proposed, for instance, a more humane manner of killing cats. The Police Department resorted to “‘sousing’ them in a tank of cold water,” despite having “a gas box in which to quickly and humanely put to death the cats.”⁵²

The society suggested that electrocution would be an even more humane method. To city people intimately familiar with the process of slaughtering chickens and other livestock, the fact that the city killed thousands of cats and dogs a year apparently was not shocking, only the fact that it might be done in an inhumane manner.

Kindness did not preclude killing. If anything, the Humane Society promised to kill more animals, thereby “freeing the city of surplus dogs and cats.”⁵³ As the pound turned its attention from work animals to beloved animals, in fact, its activities became even more focused on euthanasia. Killing unwanted cats and dogs had once taken place at home. When a distressed child wrote the *Seattle Times* in 1902 about her sadness at seeing a starving kitten on the way to school, the editors commented that “a friendly application of chloroform by some one in the neighborhood” would be the appropriate response to starving kittens or crippled dogs found on the street.⁵⁴ Humane literature promoted this practice as well. In her book *Pussy-Meow* (modeled after *Black Beauty*), S. Louise Patteson encouraged owners to chloroform all but one or two kittens when a cat gave birth. In the book, the cat-narrator awakes from a nap to find three of her five kittens missing, but quickly adjusts: “knowing that whatever [the mistress] does is for the best, I gave myself over wholly to those that remained with me.”⁵⁵ The practice was, however, far from universal and many simply turned unwanted animals out on the streets. Increasingly, however, this killing happened at

⁵¹ Letter from Charles M. Farrer, October 20, 1913, CF 53929, SMA.

⁵² Letter from Mayor Hiram Gill, April 3, 1916, CF 63867, SMA.

⁵³ Letter from King County Humane Society, September 30, 1919, CF74892, SMA.

⁵⁴ “A Sleeping Potion,” *ST*, May 23, 1902.

⁵⁵ S. Louise Patteson, *Pussy Meow: The Autobiography of a Cat* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1901), 29, 206; Grier, *Pets in America*, 81.

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the animal pound. Valuable cows and horses brought to the pound were quickly redeemed or sold. But the pound killed hundreds of dogs and cats a year in the late nineteenth century and thousands a year in the first decades of the twentieth century.⁵⁶

These concerns about cats and dogs were far from the minds of Seattleites who lived in the outskirts, who were more concerned about loose cattle and horses. Indeed, what people thought of pound reform proposals depended in part on where they lived. In its proposals, the Humane Society envisioned taking over the dog pound and seemed not to consider what would happen to the cattle pound – both of which facilities the poundmaster managed.⁵⁷ By the late 1910s, cattle had been banned from roaming the city and cars had begun to outnumber horses on urban streets. Yet in outlying districts, loose cattle and horses still roamed, as they would for a decade or more. The cattle pound apprehended 119 cattle and 79 horses in 1920. By 1931, impounds had declined to twenty-one horses and seven cattle.⁵⁸ Despite this significant problem, residents complained that the society did not “give any assurance they will properly handle” the “cattle part of the pound.”⁵⁹ It was primarily middle-class residents of these outlying neighborhoods, especially South Park and Laurelhurst, that wrote in to demand the “police” approach to animal control continue, people who worked as real-estate men, clerks, contractors, golf instructors, salesmen, business owners, business executives, and the like.⁶⁰ They lived, for example, in Laurelhurst in northeast Seattle, where new middle-class homes were being built starting in the early 1900s. Dozens of residents of that neighborhood signed a petition in 1921 demanding no change in pound management “relative to horses and cattle.”⁶¹

These petitioners suspected that a “humane” approach to the pounds would de-emphasize control and make them subject to the manure, damage to lawns and shrubbery, and village-like appearance of livestock on their streets. With references to

⁵⁶ Figures for scattered years indicate that 411 dogs were killed in 1896, 2,926 dogs were killed in 1913, and 3,448 dogs were killed in 1914. Documents do not refer to euthanizing cats until the 1920s. In the first six months of 1928, 2,010 dogs and 3,494 cats were killed. In 1934, 6,547 (96%) of the 8,716 cats brought to the pound were killed. By contrast, only 4,390 (56%) of the 7,784 dogs impounded were killed by pound workers. The remainder were redeemed by their owners, or sold to someone else. (Police Department Annual Report, 1896, SMA; City of Seattle, “Report of the Department of Health and Sanitation,” 1914; document filed August 13, 1928, CF 117670; document filed October 20, 1935, CF 148564, SMA.

⁵⁷ “Humane Society Offers to Manage Dog Pound,” *ST*, September 4, 1921; “Rap Purchasing Agent,” *ST*, September 8, 1921; document filed October 6, 1919, CF 74892, SMA.

⁵⁸ Police Department Annual Report, 1920, 1931, record series 1802-H8, SMA. The last reference to impounding cattle and horses in Seattle is in the 1937 Police Department report (4 cattle and no horses impounded; dealt with complaints about 22 loose cattle and 23 loose horses).

⁵⁹ Letter dated June 6, 1923, CF 82451, SMA.

⁶⁰ Letters filed September 19, 1921, CF 82451, Polk’s City Directories 1921-1923.

⁶¹ Junius Rochester, “Laurelhurst,” historylink.org [accessed October 2008]; petition filed September 19, 1921 CF 82451, SMA.

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“protection” and “police” authority, these petitioners demonstrated that control trumped kindness in their vision of how humans should relate to urban animals. For these petitioners, city herders were an important urban amenity, a service they should be able to call on “day and night.” Faced with these complaints, the Humane Society finally specified that it would deal with loose cattle and horses as well. It did not make clear whether their approach to cattle (as opposed to dogs) would be more humane than the Police Department’s approach.⁶² Most city-dwellers lived in the denser inner neighborhoods where loose livestock was not a problem – a fact that became important when the issue came to public vote. For them, the focus on cats and dogs was appealing. And in case the promise of better treatment of cats and dogs was not enough, the Society repeatedly emphasized that its management would be more efficient and economical than the existing arrangements. On May 2, 1922, sixty percent of city voters approved the proposition that the Humane Society should manage the city’s animal pounds.⁶³ The success of the initiative and the transfer of the pound to the Humane Society marked the growing focus on sentimental relations with animals.⁶⁴ According to Humane Society accounts, it also reduced the suffering of the creatures who ended up at the pound. The Humane Society brought a focus on “clean kennels, good food and a well trained personnel.”⁶⁵ Restrictive covenants in white middle- class neighborhoods made clear that only pets fit into the middle-class home. The initiative granting the Humane Society control of the city pounds indicated that kindness toward animals had become a widely shared cultural value. However, city dwellers were far from agreed on whether kindness meant giving dogs the freedom of the city or whether dog and cat owners could better protect their animal companions and better protect their neighbors’ property by keeping pets close to home.

¹ Extract of “**Cows in the Commons, Dogs on the Lawn: A History of Animals in Seattle**”, Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the History Program of University of Washington, 2010.

⁶² Letters filed September 19, 1921, CF 82451, SMA; “Humane Society,” *ST*, March 14, 1922; letter dated May 28, 1923, CF 89749; letter dated June 22, 1923, CF 90210, SMA.

⁶³ The vote was 28,590 to 19,284 per “Humane Society Initiative,” *ST*, May 3, 1922.

⁶⁴ “Dog Pound Initiative,” *SPI*, April 28, 1922; “Humane Society Thanks Voters of City for Pound,” *SPI*, May 3, 1922; “Humane Society Promises Saving to Community,” *ST*, April 30, 1922.

⁶⁵ Association of Washington Cities/Bureau of Governmental Research, University of Washington, “Dogs as Municipal Problem” *Washington Municipal Bulletin* 78 (1943): 16.

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