CHAPTER XV

HUMANE EDUCATION AND CHARACTER FORMATION
IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, humane advocates undertook systematic efforts to institutionalize humane education on a national level. They pursued legislation for compulsory humane education, the formation of kindness clubs, outreach to youth organizations like the Boy Scouts, the creation of a network of professional educators, and the production of appropriate teaching materials. Despite some initial successes, however, the movement failed to establish humane education in such a way as to ensure and perpetuate its incorporation within educational systems. Very few of the programs animal advocates launched proved enduring in their impact. Only modest penetration of the schools occurred, and the burden of other responsibilities, especially municipal animal control, limited the amount of time and energy that organizations could devote to school outreach. The attempt to standardize and unify the elementary and secondary school science curriculum subsumed elements of humane education and nature-study, its environmental counterpart, while rejecting many of their premises. At the same time, an array of competing interests, promoting consumptive uses of animals, took their programs into the schools, further displacing the kindness-to-animals didactic. When a new generation of advocates sought to revitalize animal protection in the post-World War II era, they had to virtually reinvent humane education as a field of endeavor.
Nature-Study, Humane Education, and Youth Socialization

If, as Lawrence Cremin concluded, the period 1910-1925 was the heyday of the movement for humane instruction, the work undoubtedly received a boost from the Progressive-era preoccupation with youthful character. Between 1890 and World War I, reformers of all kinds placed education at the center of their programs of social betterment. The American educational order underwent massive expansion at all levels, and compulsory attendance legislation drew hundreds of thousands of children into the schools. In part, this investment in education resulted from the many changes that industrialism had wrought. Increasingly, the school was asked to assume educative responsibilities that had once been borne within the domestic setting. In the industrial era, with the daily routine of both mothers and fathers centered outside of the household, many expected the school system to fill the breach.¹

Animal protectionists tried to keep pace with this development. From the movement’s earliest stages, humane advocates concluded that the permanent success of their work depended on the interest and involvement of children. They invested time and energy in organizing Bands of Mercy and in the distribution of literature promoting kindness to animals. By the early twentieth century, the instruction of children was an established priority of humane societies.

The fate of humane education at this time was bound up with that of nature-study, a consequential trend in Progressive era pedagogy. Many Americans looked to nature-study to mitigate worries that children could not thrive in an urban society. They saw in

it a means for preserving the beneficial effects of wilderness and nature as a hedge
gainst the degeneracy of modern civilization. Nature-study was part of the response to
anxieties stemming from urbanization and industrialization.

The two fields had much in common. Nature-study’s rise and decline--its
principal organ Nature-Study Review was published between 1905 and 1923—exactly
coincided with that of the movement for compulsory humane education. Both nature-
study and humane education promised ethical benefits, moral guidance, spiritual
inspiration, healthy recreational alternatives to the penny-arcade or the poolroom, and
healing affinities with nature. Both focused on non-human nature for their subject
matter.

The two fields also faced some of the same obstacles. Each was hampered by the
inadequacy of teacher training in methods and content. Each faced the challenge of
correlation, the need to provide materials that incorporated humane and nature-study
precepts into lessons concerning science, composition, civics, reading, geography,
history, art, music, when a specific time could or would not be set aside for them as
discrete subjects. Finally, both had to contend with the more powerful trend toward
unification and rationalization of the elementary and secondary science curriculum in the
United States.


On correlation, see Comstock, Nature-Study, 16-20; and Burt Jay Tice, Humane Education: What to Teach and How to Teach It (Providence: Rhode Island Humane Education Committee, n. d.), 2.
In part, the nature-study movement was a product of Romanticism, that late eighteenth-century aesthetic sensibility that exalted the natural as an inspiration to individual feeling and emotion. By the mid-nineteenth century, Romanticism had given nature new meaning and value, as a defining element of middle class identity in western industrial societies. Nature-study's proponents believed that individuals living in an urban industrial society could not do without nature's ennobling and healing effects.4

In their regard for wildlife, humane education and nature-study were often similar. Professional nature-study educators usually disdained such pursuits as hunting and trapping. One of them, Anna Comstock, anticipated the day when men—properly educated through nature-study—would "enjoy nature through seeing how creatures live rather than by watching them die."5 Nature-study also encouraged the combination of humane sentiment and ecological sensitivity with practical work or assignments.6

However, while both humane education and nature-study had romantic antecedents, and demonstrated a strong imaginative sympathy with nature and with non-human animals, there were important differences. For one thing, there was a more utilitarian variant of nature study, linked to the interests of agriculture. Cornell horticulturist Liberty Hyde Bailey, an influential figure in Progressive era rural policy, espoused a neo-Jeffersonian vision of country life as regenerative of the nation's moral

4 Jonas Frykman and Orvar Lofgren, Culture Builders: A Historical Anthropology of Middle-Class Life (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987).


and material greatness. Bailey believed that the schools could spur that revitalization by encouraging an enhanced appreciation for nature. In the 1890s, Cornell became a center for the development of nature-study. The state of New York, hoping to temper the enthusiasm of farmers' children for migration to the city, supported the program.\(^7\)

The utilitarian perspective concerning animals was evident in statutory language and teaching instructions concerning humane education in some states. According to one bulletin,

> The purpose [of humane education] is to contribute to the highest and most enduring happiness of the human race. The temporary desires and pleasures of the inferior animals are to be taken into consideration, rather in view of the effect of their recognition upon human character, than from the standpoint of the positive rights of the animals themselves. . . . The only right anything possesses is the right to be useful. . . . The economic or utilitarian value of animals has thus been emphasized throughout the course.\(^8\)

While their own texts sometimes invoked utilitarian arguments as part of the rationale for animal protection, humanitarians chafed at more extreme examples of objectification that reduced

> the usefulness of animals [to] a sort of inventory of their physical parts and a minute delineation of the ways which ingenious man has found to turn them to his own account . . . A child by this means is brought to look at a live cow or horse not as a sentient creature which thinks, and suffers, and has preferences . . . but as a temporarily animated collection of knife-handles and spoons, and leather, and glue, and beef, and milk.\(^9\)

More significantly, advocates of humaneness tended to emotionalize the objectives and the content of nature-study work, sometimes sanctioning and encouraging textual material not so easily indulged by others. Strongly religious arguments for animal care, stories of animal fidelity and sagacity, and certain anthropomorphic tendencies at times

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9 "Notes," *Journal of Zoophily* [I have lost the citation.]
distinguished humane education from nature-study and from the professional science education curriculum that replaced them both by the 1930s. Such perceived credulity offended science and nature-study educators, some of whom openly disdained the humane movement’s instructional material. The author of one history of elementary school science singled out humane and temperance education as representing the worst extreme of “special-interest groups” that had frequently distorted science “in order to force it to contribute to the objectives set up.”

Nature-study and humane advocates found themselves directly at odds in other arenas. Clark University’s Clifton Hodge, author of a widely used nature-study text, actively opposed vivisection regulation legislation in Massachusetts. Ernest Harold Baynes and Ernest Thompson Seton, both nature popularizers who for much of their careers enjoyed friendly relations with animal protection societies, grew progressively aloof from and then hostile toward the humane movement on account of the vivisection issue.

Nature-study did provide useful examples for the development of systematic humane education lesson plans and texts, which began to emerge in the 1890s. Before that time, humane educators had relied upon eclectic accumulations of material, and an array of didactic stories and novels devoted to kindness to animals. Many humane

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10 Orva Ervin Underhill, The Origins and Development of Elementary-School Science (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1941), 122-23. Underhill cited an old anecdote (used by George Angell) whose typicality by the time of his study may be questionable. But see Mary F. Lovell’s claim that “animals are rendered unhappy even by harsh words,” in “Seven Reasons for Being Kind to Animals,” Stany Cross 29 (Nov. 1920), 171.

periodicals included selections for children, and some of these found their way into published works marked for use by Bands of Mercy. In 1883, Abraham Firth, a close associate of George Angell’s, published the first edition of *Voices of the Speechless*, a compendium of literary excerpts. This work went through at least four printings in twenty years.¹²

In the last decade of the century, however, the first manuals and textbooks with systematic humane lesson plans, question and answer sets, and other offerings began to appear. In 1902, the AHA formed a committee to promote the publication of textbooks that inculcated humane ideals, and quickly found common cause with Ginn and Company. The Animal Rescue League’s Anna Harris Smith worked closely with the Boston publisher and in 1904 Ginn issued “The Jones Readers.” These texts had been submitted for approval to the AHA, which drew up guidelines for submission to the nation’s 166 other publishers of children’s textbooks. By 1930, about a dozen humane education titles had appeared.¹³


The Campaign for Compulsory Humane Education Laws

The first discussion of compulsory humane education occurred in Massachusetts in the 1880s, and by 1886 George Angell helped to secure a humane instruction mandate. By the early 1900s, the notion of a national campaign for compulsory humane education began to gather momentum. In 1905, William O. Stillman of the AHA, and Stella H. Preston formed the New York Humane Education Committee to advance a state requirement. In that same year, both Oklahoma and Pennsylvania passed laws providing for moral and humane education. The Oklahoma legislation required humane instruction as part of the moral education of its future citizens, and made it clear that character lay at the heart of such initiatives. Sponsors wanted educators "to teach morality in the broadest meaning of the word, for the purpose of elevating and refining the character of school children . . . that they may know how to conduct themselves as social beings in relation to each other . . . and thereby lessen wrong-doing and crime." The law mandated that one half hour each week be devoted to teaching "kindness to and humane treatment and protection of dumb animals and birds; their lives, habits and usefulness, and the important part they are intended to fulfil in the economy of nature."14

In 1909, the compulsory humane education movement achieved its most important benchmark, the passage of legislation in Illinois. The Illinois law was the first to include sanctions for non-compliance and provisions for instruction in teacher training.

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schools. In November 1915, the AHA adopted a resolution favoring the establishment of compulsory humane education in every state, selecting the 1909 Illinois law as its model. However, of the three states that passed humane education laws in 1917—Maine, Wisconsin, and New York—only New York's legislation followed the Illinois model. Compliance was tied to public funds, and the Commissioner of Education was directed to publicize the requirement. The bill passed after a carefully planned campaign led by Stella Preston, the ASPCA's first Director of Education, who also prepared an appropriate syllabus for each grade. As an instrument of character development, the kindness ethic also served the goal of assimilation. "We teach in our evening schools and Americanization classes," Morris Siegel, New York City's director of continuation schools, wrote, "that the humane treatment of animals is not only a matter of right feeling but conformity with the customs of the country and obedience to the law of the land." In 1919, disapproving what she perceived as "the reign of lawlessness which has followed the war," Mary Lovell urged her colleagues to push for humane education as an aid to immigrant socialization, and an alternative to immigration restriction. Under the circumstances, Lovell continued, "there is a sentiment in favor of restricted immigration, but there is not enough sentiment in

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favor of dealing wisely with the emigrants already here, which can be done in large measure through right training of their children where there is opportunity, namely, in the public schools.  

William Stillman dreamed of a campaign to secure a federal requirement for humane education, and at least one humane educator thought that the ratification of suffrage would lead to the election of female lawmakers committed to such a proposal. But the process proceeded state by state. In 1920, Kentucky became the eighteenth state to require humane education in its schools, “for the purpose of lessening crime and raising the standard of good citizenship, and inculcating the spirit of humanity.” In 1922, similar legislation was proposed in New Jersey, and William Shultz estimated that by that year, twenty states had humane education requirements. Only three, however—New York, Oklahoma, and Illinois—included a provision to punish non-compliance, by withholding state funds for salaries and school budgets.

Here and there, progress in institutionalizing humane education ensued. Both the Governor and the Superintendent of Education in Pennsylvania endorsed Mary Lovell’s work, and the MSPCA’s Francis Rowley secured a general endorsement from the United States Commissioner of Education. In Colorado, the State Teachers’ College adopted a course of study in ethical and humane education that was directed by the state’s Bureau  

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of Child and Animal Protection. For a time, humane advocates made efforts to canvas the meetings of the National Education Association (NEA), and it seems that animal protectionists were successful in their outreach to national and regional teaching organizations, as well as to school system administrators. In 1924, the NEA president endorsed humane education at the annual meeting of the AHA.

Despite such progress, the push for compulsory humane instruction was not necessarily instrumental in ensuring access or influence within the schools. The law was frequently a dead letter in those states where it was approved. Hostile and indifferent superintendents and teachers could ignore the statutes with little fear of recriminations, and effective texts and materials were not always readily available.

Chicago, with its tradition of progressive experimentation in education, promised to be one place in which humane education might gain a significant foothold. But by 1923, Mary Lovell would cast doubt even on the success of the movement for humane education in Illinois. In the late 1930s, Marion Krows, on the basis of her own experience in a small town outside New York City, concluded that the law in her state

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was "unevenly observed," its enforcement usually contingent on "some superintendent, principal, or teacher with a kind heart, who personally has compelled action."  

In contrast, in Massachusetts, the AHES enjoyed comity with school authorities, and open access, although there was no explicit requirement for humane education. Instead, it came within the charge under Massachusetts law for teachers to "exert their best endeavors to impress the minds of children committed to their care with the principles of justice, humanity, universal benevolence, etc." Maine provided another special case. In the early 1920s, Governor Percival Baxter, a strong defender of animals, pushed a compulsory humane education requirement through the legislature.  

The emergence of the professional humane educator was a natural outgrowth of the compulsory humane education movement. The ASPCA created a humane education department in 1916, and hired Stella Preston as its director. In time, Frances E. Clarke, who first came into contact with the ASPCA as an instructor at the Maxwell Training Institute for teachers in Brooklyn, went on to direct the department. In succeeding decades, Clarke edited half a dozen anthologies devoted to stories and poems about animals, as well as a number of pamphlets. The Maxwell Training School during her 

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23 "Humane Education in Massachusetts," *ODA* 44 (Oct. 1911), 74. "Seven Hundred Teachers," *ODA* 46 (Dec. 1913), 104, reported that the Worcester School Board closed its schools early one afternoon so that teachers could attend Rowley's lecture on humane education. On Baxter, see "What We Anti-Vivisectionists Are Doing," *Open Door* 13 (July 1924), 14.
time there established humane education as an elective course, with credits being granted for proficiency.24

The stated goal of the ASPCA division was “not to do the humane education work in our schools, so much as to stimulate the work of the schools themselves.” By the beginning of the academic year in autumn 1921, the ASPCA was promoting essay contests within the school system. That summer, the department cooperated with four Lower East Side school districts to measure the effectiveness of humane propaganda with the children of the foreign-born. The activity the ASPCA chose to encourage was the rounding up of unwanted strays. During 1922, the department estimated that it had reached 300 schools in the course of its work. In the summer of 1923, Preston estimated, New York schoolchildren took more than 28,000 small animals from the streets.25

In 1925, as a tribute to the man whose leadership had stabilized the organization, the AHA announced the formation of the William O. Stillman Foundation. By February 1926, over $5,000 had been collected. By late 1927, plans for the fund included the hiring of a qualified expert to travel from state to state, “enlisting the cooperation of commissioners of education and superintendents of schools in the development of education.” A bequest from Dr. Stillman’s estate boosted the endowment to $15,000 by


January 1929, and a series of leaflets was eventually produced. The missionary work called for does not seem to have materialized, however.26

The Longevity and Impact of the Bands of Mercy

For years, Our Dumb Animals reported extensively on the formation of Bands of Mercy. However, such reports were better reflections of speaking engagements than of actual clubs or groups that went on to continuous activity. Referring to the "sixty thousand branches of our American Bands of Mercy" in 1905, George Angell wrote, "What does this mean? It means that over sixty thousand audiences have been addressed on kindness both to human beings and the lower animals." Some years later, the ARES reported that over 103,000 Bands had formed between 1882 and 1916.27

Certainly, Angell and his co-workers understood that the inevitable succession of graduating classes would continually jeopardize the future of any given band. Still, Angell proclaimed his confidence that "the influence of no Band once formed will ever be lost. . . . Not only as long as its members live (for they will never forget the kind acts they have been led to do)." Angell claimed that a number of influential people had come to humane convictions as a result of lectures, poetry, and other forms of exposure to the message of kindness to animals. Francis Rowley published a notice of welcome to Massachusetts’s new school commissioner, who had reportedly been a Band of Mercy


member in his youth. In 1922, Rowley estimated that in 40 years of activity, the Bands of Mercy had enrolled over 4,000,000 children.\footnote{28}

While admitting their positive influence, social scientist William Shultz underscored their "transitory character unless each individual Band is followed up." Where "no attempt is made to encourage them, they soon dissolve, leaving little or no effect upon the children's characters." William Stillman, too, conceded that "they were not as carefully looked after or as rigorously followed up as they might be." Rowley believed that in many cases interest was sustained through the course of one school year at any rate, and that in successive years new bands would form at the instigation of teachers or humane educators who visited the schools again. In some cases, the Bands had enjoyed great longevity.\footnote{29}

In fact, under Rowley's leadership the AHES launched an ambitious effort to hold the bands together by maintaining humane educators in the field. None of the organizational initiatives of the first decades of the century matched the accomplishments of the AHES in building and sustaining a cadre of humane missionaries during the period 1910-1925. Educational outreach to the schools was especially robust in the pre-World War I years, and the success of the AHES initiatives depended heavily on its field representatives, at least some of whom were paid. In January 1916, Our Dumb Animals

\footnote{28} "Every New Band of Mercy," ODA 39 (Feb. 1907), 145; "Our New School Commissioner," ODA 49 (Sept. 1916), 56; and "How Long Do the Bands of Mercy Last?" ODA (Mar. 1901), repr. in ODA 49 (Sept. 1916), 62; and "Running Into Millions," ODA 54 (Jan. 1922), 120.

\footnote{29} Shultz, Humane Movement, 130-31; William O. Stillman, "Humane Education Again," NHR 11 (Aug. 1923), 151; "Do Bands of Mercy Live?" ODA 48 (June 1915), 16; and AHA, Ann. R. 1916, 47.
published portraits of twelve of them, and the 1918 Annual Report confirmed that sixteen were in the field.  

The AHES supported its field representatives with a broad selection of humane education materials, including novels like *Black Beauty*. By 1913, the AHES was by far the largest publisher and distributor of humane literature in the world. *Our Dumb Animals* enjoyed a circulation of 60,000 a month. In December 1916, 931 new Bands were reported, the largest figure ever for a one-month period, although one third of these formed in Massachusetts. That same year, Guy Richardson estimated that the AHES had spent over $100,000 on literature and its distribution since 1882.

Three AHES field workers were African-American, and humane advocates agreed that there was great need of humane instruction among the Negro populations of the South. For many years, Reverend Richard Carroll, F. Rivers Barnwell, and Mrs. E. L. Dixon lectured on the proper treatment of animals within the black communities of South Carolina and Texas, and Carroll spoke at several AHA conventions. The participation of these and other African-American humane workers undoubtedly influenced the steady support for African-American issues within the pages of *Our Dumb Animals*, and, to a lesser extent, the National Humane Review. However, while challenging the philosophy

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31 “American Humane Education Society,” ODA 46 (Oct. 1913), 66; “Humane Education,” ODA 46 (July 1913), 26; “931 New Bands of Mercy,” ODA (Dec. 1916), 110; Guy Richardson, in AHA. Ann. R. 1916, 47; and AHES Ann. R., in ODA 52 (May 1920), 188. In the fiscal year ending March 1, 1920, the AHES had receipts of $1,163.71 and expenditures of $24,468.99.
of discrimination and decrying many specific acts of racial violence (most notably lynching), the AHES was cautious in its operations. Within those areas of the country where legal segregation prevailed, it was a foregone conclusion that the Bands of Mercy would be organized along racial lines. In 1912, Our Dumb Animals reported that the Washington Humane Society had organized a Band of Mercy in every school, with one of three organizers (race unknown) assigned to the 200 “colored schools.”

Once World War I began, the focus of many animal protection organizations shifted to war concerns. Not simply a distraction, however, the war threatened humane ideals more fundamentally as the United States prepared for battle. In the years before America joined the war, humanitarians could point to humane education as a powerful solution to the world’s ills. With the war tearing Europe apart, American advocates cast it as an inoculant against the animosities and prejudices bred by conflict, and the guarantor of peace. But the wartime focus on preparedness also placed humanitarians who had so closely identified themselves with anti-militarism on the defensive. It became increasingly common to cite the powerful example of Abraham Lincoln, who had combined compassionate feelings toward all life—human and non-human—with resolute, pragmatic, and inspired leadership during the country’s most serious crisis. Humanitarians felt vulnerable to the charge that their own educational program would lead to the “softening” of American youth. Rowley met the matter straight on in an editorial. "Should anyone imagine that humane education means a generation of boys

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and girls with all iron sapped from their blood, a generation of cowards and cravens, he only reveals his total ignorance of what humane education is," Rowley declared. "The spirit of chivalry toward all the weak and defenseless, the hatred of injustice and cruelty will make of the citizen, should the time demand it, a far better patriot and soldier than the selfish, bullying pugnacious spirit that often proclaims not a possible hero, but only an arrant coward." In any case, once America entered the conflict, war animal relief filtered straight into Band of Mercy work and other humane initiatives like Be Kind to Animals Week. The message of universal peace through humane education was entirely subordinated to patriotic imperatives. The movement's most vital activity--its outreach to children--was dramatically reconfigured to serve the interests of American nationalism.

Be Kind to Animals Week and Other Publicity Campaigns

Humane education dovetailed with other forms of public outreach during the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1912, Henry F. Lewith, a South Carolina animal protectionist, began to promote the idea of communicating a simple and uniform message in all public interactions--"Be Kind to Animals!" For a year, the AHES followed this program slavishly, distributing 150,000 badges emblazoned with those words. Eventually, the AHA voted to set aside one week each year for a focused effort to broadcast the slogan. First celebrated in May 1915, by 1920 Be Kind to Animals Week had become a principal focus of outreach in the schools, and the major public relations

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event of the animal protection movement nationwide. Be Kind to Animals Week incorporated Humane Sunday, observed in England since 1865, in order to encourage sermons and religious observances. Lantern slides were provided for projection in movie houses before the showing of main features, and posters were produced for display by shopkeepers and others. The issuance of supportive proclamations from state governors became routine. In 1919, Connecticut's governor wrote, "The appalling losses of millions of human lives brought about by the barbarity and untold cruelty of the Great War, are a striking reminder of the need of kindness and humaneness not only in men's mutual relationships but in their treatment of dumb animals."  

Parades and pageants were an important part of Be Kind to Animals Week as well. Bands of Mercy and animal welfare groups frequently participated in these public spectacles. In 1921, President Harding and General Pershing viewed a Washington procession of thirty floats led by the President's dog Laddie Boy. The parade included such other non-human notables as Stubby, the World War I canine hero and Georgetown University mascot, and Jeff and Kedron, Pershing's own mounts. Dogs, horses, goats, and birds all appeared in the parade, organized by four local humane groups. 

The Be Kind to Animals Week poster contests sponsored by the AIES and AHA drew hundreds of entries from schoolchildren. By 1926, Preston noted, many of the

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world's humane societies routinely sponsored them. In helping to motivate the art lesson, the poster-drawing competition became an important complement to written and oral expositions of humane values, fulfilling the objective of correlating humane education with the regular elements of the school curriculum.  

In the years just prior to World War I, the motion picture became an important adjunct to humane work. In England, the RSPCA and the Blue Cross Society pioneered in this realm with two films, the first concerning Europe's traffic in decrepit horses, the other dealing with military animal relief on the war front. American animal organizations began to produce their own films to advance the goals of humane education, showcase their work of animal care, and promote specific campaigns like war animal relief. In 1915, the New York Woman's League for Animals, working with the Universal Film Corporation, produced one of the first, "The Prayer of a Horse." Sadly, the movie's attempt at verisimilitude appears to have involved real cruelty.

Regular feature films sometimes reflected the spread of humane sentiment. In "Our Mutual Girl" (1915), starring Norma Phillips, a young woman visits the ASPCA animal shelter and takes a number of homeless dogs away to her country retreat, where they enjoy every comfort. On the way there, the woman intervenes when a cruel driver

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38 "Prize Poster Contest for schools," ODA 54 (Jan. 1922), 119; Stella Preston, "The Development of the Poster in Humane Education," NHR 14 (Oct. 1926), 18; and Eugene Zimmerman, "How Poster Competitions Affect Character," NHR 15 (May 1927), 3. There appears to have been some sort of self-censorship practiced. Vivisection, pound release, transportation, and slaughter cruelties were not among the range of suggested topics for poster art.

39 Ernest A. Dench, "'Be Kind to Animals' at the Movies," ODA 48 (July 1915), 18.
beats a lame horse. She telephones the ASPCA and an agent comes to place the man under arrest. An ASPCA ambulance takes the suffering horse away. In 1916, the AHES began plans for a film to further its work. In 1920, having spent $4,000, the AHES released “The Bell of Atri,” inspired by Longfellow’s poem about the faithful horse who, abandoned by the heartless knight who had been his master, rings the Bell of Justice to summon the populace to right this wrong. The poem had long been a staple of humane literature. Filmed on the town common of Dedham, Massachusetts, “The Bell of Atri” was subsequently shown in various fora around the country.

In seeking broader exposure, the movement also relied heavily upon supporters with a national reputation, like celebrities George Arliss, Irene Castle, and Minnie Maddern Fiske, all of whom gave unselfishly of their time. A fourth supporter of national prominence was Percival P. Baxter (1876-1969), lawyer, politician, and Governor of Maine between 1921 and 1924. During his tenure as governor, Baxter frequently put his reputation and office into the service of the cause, and engaged defenders of animal exploitation in public debate. Throughout his life, Baxter’s dogs went everywhere with him. On the occasion of Garry’s death, the governor ordered the state house flags placed at half-mast to remind the public of its duty toward non-human animals. When veterans groups objected to the lowering of the flag in memory of a dog,

40 “The Society in Motion Pictures,” Our Animal Friends 6 (Feb. 1915), 22.

41 “Our Moving Picture,” ODA 48 (Mar. 1916), 152; “Humane Education in New York City,” ODA 54 (Sept. 1921), 58; “The Bell of Atri in California,” ODA 54 (Dec. 1921), 102; and C. P. Harris, “‘Wendy’ and ‘The Bell of Atri,’” ODA 54 (Feb. 1922), 144. Angell’s account of the story is presented in “Bell of Justice,” ODA 20 (July 1887), 23. The Louisiana SPCA also produced a film in the 1920s, based on Senator Vest’s “Plea for the Dog.” See “Man’s Best Friend,” NHR 14 (Dec. 1926), 22.
Baxter issued an unapologetic public response. Baxter also experimented with pet-assisted therapy, placing a dog with the 200 prisoners of Thomaston State Prison. Even his farewell message to the people of Maine bespoke his commitment to the prevention of animal suffering. By the late 1920s, Baxter had become a Lincolnesque figure, with anecdotes of his kindness and an essay on his Irish Setters filtering down into juvenile literature.42

Morally Straight: From Band of Mercy Boy to Boy Scout

Because humane education sought to reshape conduct as well as attitude, the Bands of Mercy and related initiatives embraced direct action. Animal organizations freely celebrated individual acts of kindness, and their publications frequently included anecdotes concerning animal rescue and relief by Band of Mercy members. Organizers enlisted the participation of children in a variety of practical efforts to help animals, passing out copies of “The Horse’s Prayer” and Black Beauty, feeding birds, distributing pledge cards, and rescuing stray and injured animals.43


Although early humane education literature had sometimes highlighted cruel or insensitive behavior by girls, by the end of the century, the didactic energy focused almost exclusively upon boys. Eventually, narratives of youthful humane work were consolidated into one idealized character, the Band of Mercy boy. The Band of Mercy boy was not only a repository of humane thought and values, he enacted them in ways large and small at all times. He was an active promoter of humane treatment, gently interceding against neglect of animals through instructive reproach and intervention when adults were present, and conscientious and enlightened action when they were not. The Band of Mercy boy might help a horse eat from an improperly fixed feed bag, provide water to a thirsty animal, or carry an ailing, wounded, or stray animal to the local shelter or veterinary clinic. By 1912, Francis Rowley had even harnessed the Bands of Mercy to the goal of raising funds for the erection of the Angell Memorial Hospital.44

Such focus on the boy intensified during the Progressive era, and some elements of the kindness ethic found their way into the Boy Scout movement. Ernest Thompson Seton and other founders saw scouting as a means of preserving the beneficial influences of wilderness in a modern society. The Boy Scouts became the quintessential Progressive “character factory,” bringing man and boy, and manhood and boyhood, together in a convergent and continuous link. Promoters of the concept hoped that living close to nature, learning woodlore and campcraft, and gaining exposure to frontier skills and values would check the debilitating effects of industrial civilization. Scouting

permitted men to shape the play, thoughts, and habits of boys, and to cultivate the same font of primitive virtues that they sought to retain in themselves.  

At first, humanitarians were encouraged to believe, and did believe, that there was a place for them in the scouting movement, which both the MSPCA’s Our Dumb Animals and the AHA’s National Humane Review celebrated. In September 1913, the AHA’s journal published two related articles, the first one written by the editor of Boys’ Life and Scouting. Discussing the movement’s goals and character, he stressed that it was a patriotic yet non-military order for boys devoted to “body, mind and character.” The rifle, he emphasized, “is not a part of their equipment.”  

The second feature, written by AHA staff member Sydney Coleman, directly addressed the role of the Boy Scout in humane work. The article took as its goal the practical fulfillment of Scout Rule No. 6, which made humane conduct a standard of behavior: “A Scout is kind. He is a friend to animals. He will not kill or hurt any living creature needlessly, but will strive to save and protect all harmless life.” Coleman recommended the participation of scouts in humane society work in their communities, and their instruction in the basic identification of and response to acts of cruelty against animals and children. The scout could be a provider of first aid to injured animals, a rescuer of pets and homeless animals from the vagaries of the streets, and an informal humane agent who could alert police or society representatives to cases of injury or  

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disability to animals. Coleman mentioned hunting and trapping as specific practices in which Boy Scouts ought not to participate. "Blood sports are far from necessary to train boys in the ways of chivalry and other scout virtues," Coleman wrote. "Teach him to hunt with the camera and confine his shooting to a target and his manliness will be increased a hundred-fold." 47

In another article, naturalist Enos Mills registered his approval of scouting's commitment to positive interactions with nature and animals, its anti-militarism, and its character-building results. For his part, Ernest Thompson Seton fretted about what he perceived to be an ever-expanding emphasis on military drills and discipline, taking a stand against the inclusion of a chapter on patriotism in the Boy Scout handbook. This led to discord with Theodore Roosevelt, another supporter and a close personal friend of Chief Scout James West. Roosevelt had charged Seton with nature fakery a few years earlier, and was suspicious of him on other counts as well. In 1915, Roosevelt refused to lend his name to a fund-raising drive for the Boy Scouts of America, citing the infiltration of pacifistic elements bent on "interfering with the training of our boys to a standard of military efficiency." Under pressure, Seton relinquished his affiliation, after which Roosevelt promptly offered his energies to the drive. 48

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48 Enos A. Mills, "Boy Scouts Prepared for Peace," ODA 47 (July 1914), 35; and Betty Keller, Black Wolf: The Life of Ernest Thompson Seton (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984), 172-79. Some understood that the problem of militarism within the scouting movement had been present from the beginning, certainly in England, where Baden-Powell's participation in the Boer War was well known. On militarism and preparedness within American scouting, see Macleod, Building Character, 178-81.
As it turned out, scouting’s ambivalent relationship to militarism in the World War I period was rivaled by the paradox of its policies concerning animals. In 1911, MSPCA president Francis Rowley discussed reports that scouts in Minnesota had taken guns and traps along with them on a recent hiking excursion. Rowley found this inconsistency in other contexts as well, even in semi-religious journals or periodicals that took advertisements that promoted guns, powders, steel traps, and other equipment to youthful audiences. Rowley “had seen some of them with editorials and contributed articles inculcating kindness to animals on one page and advising their readers on the next to buy the various devices that not only kill defenseless wild life, but wound and torture it.”

For many associated with scouting, as for Roosevelt, there was no necessary contradiction between kindness to domestic animals and consumptive exploitation of wild animals. However, such a philosophy clashed with the humane movement’s efforts to promote the inclusion of (certain) wild animals in the category of those deserving of human kindness. This led to a major confrontation in 1920, when advertisements advocating the commercial advantages of trapping began to appear in The Boy Scout Magazine and other publications aimed at youth. Humanitarians launched a major offensive to combat the ads. Referring to Scout Rule No. 6, Minnie Maddern Fiske asked, “Is the treaty [the Boy Scout] has made with the animal world to be merely a scrap

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49 Francis H. Rowley, “What Does the Boy Scout Movement Mean?” *ODA* 43 (Feb. 1911), 138; and Francis H. Rowley, “Consistency?” *ODA* 48 (Oct. 1915), 72. Baden-Powell, of course, expressed a clear commitment to the ideology of domination over nature in *Pig-Stecking or Hog-Hunting* (1899), celebrating that sport as “manly and tip-top,” a “task of the brutal and most primitive of all hunts—namely the pursuit, with a good weapon in your hand, of an enemy whom you want to kill... you rush for blood with all the ecstasy of a fight to the death.” Baden-Powell is quoted in Richard Ryder, *Animal Revolution: Changing Attitudes Toward Speciesism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 134.
of paper? Will his faithlessness lead to other breaches of his manly promises to ‘be kind’?” Several months later, Fiske applauded the decision of Boy Scout officials to reject trapping advertisements, calling it “a progressive act.” Chief Scout James West sent the AHA a copy of the magazine’s editorial board statement that trapping contravened the Sixth Scout Law. However, a statement by Honorary Vice President Daniel Carter Beard revealed that the hunter-conservationist’s distaste for commercial exploitation of animals was as much responsible for the decision as any humanitarian principle. 50

Throughout the period 1915-1925, these contradictions notwithstanding, the humane movement made serious efforts to cultivate a close relationship with the Boy Scouts. The AHES offered a $50 prize for the best essay by a Boy Scout on kind attitudes toward animals, wild and domestic. The MSPCA announced with pride that its veterinarian had been consulted for the development of the “First Aid to Animals” section of the scouting handbook. Humanitarians also called attention to scouts who performed deeds of kindness on behalf of animals. In August 1919, the National Humane Review proudly published a short speech delivered by a Nebraska scout during Be Kind to Animals Week: “The standard of manliness is not only how do we treat our fellowmen, but how do we treat all animate creation?” Animal advocates strove to involve Boy

Scouts in all aspects of their work, conscripting them for "Be Kind to Animals" marches, and in one instance placing them on a humane society's board of directors.\(^1\)

The kindness ethic seemed to fare better in scouting literature after the war. The Handbook for Boys commended thoughtfulness toward animals as an important scout trait. Animal rescue, birdhouse building, and other humane endeavors were encouraged. "First Aid to Animals" was the subject of a merit badge, one more example of animal care's being institutionalized as part of a broader ethic of concern.\(^2\)

**The Henry Bergh Memorial Foundation**

The most important opportunity in the history of humane education in America came in the form of a major gift to Columbia University in 1907. At that time, General Horace W. Carpentier, who served on the Columbia Board of Trustees, gave the university $100,000 for the establishment of the Henry Bergh Foundation for the Promotion of Humane Education. Carpentier, a life member of both the AHES and the ASPCA, had served on the Executive Committee of the latter.\(^3\)

Accepting the gift, Columbia's President Nicholas Murray Butler established a faculty committee to determine how to use the funds. Its members included Edward T.

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\(^2\) "Boy Scouts and Their Dumb Friends," ODA 56 (Aug. 1923). 46. In the 1930s, the Boy Scout merit badge booklet First Aid to Animals included a biographical portrait of George Angell. See First Aid to Animals (New York: Boy Scouts of America, 1935).

\(^3\) A "forty-niner" and one-time Mayor of Oakland who accumulated a large fortune in the western gold rush, Carpentier had previously endowed a chair in Chinese language and literature at Columbia, giving the university $100,000 in 1901. See "General Carpentier Dies at 93," N.Y. Times, 1 Feb. 1918, 9.
Devine and Samuel McCune Lindsay, professors in the Department of Social Economy in the Faculty of Political Science. In short order, the committee recommended that the income of the fund be appropriated to support the salary of Lindsay himself as Professor of Social Legislation. Lindsay, as General Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, had drafted the bill that would result in the creation of the United States Children's Bureau. Lindsay's interest in social legislation and his relationship to the broader world of "humane endeavor" apart from animal protection profoundly shaped the direction of the foundation.  

Columbia certainly wanted the money, but from the start its officials seemed uncertain of how to employ it to advance General Carpentier's interests. Soon after the foundation was established, Lindsay's associate Roswell McCrea told several correspondents that plans were very hazy. In the spring of 1909, the foundation sponsored a course of nine public lectures, all poorly attended. Abandoning this approach forever, Lindsay moved to make the foundation's central concern the collection and dissemination of information on the progress of humane legislation, employing both graduate students and other associates for the purpose.  

The use of one of the largest gifts ever made in connection with American humane work naturally drew the attention of animal protectionists. Humane advocates seem to have kept an open mind about the foundation's work at first; however, in 1910,  

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after the appearance of its first product, Roswell McCrea's interpretive survey, The Humane Movement, they came to believe that the Columbia program was badly off track. McCrea, a protégé of Lindsay and Devine who eventually joined the Columbia faculty as a professor of economics, lamented the lack of reliable information and data concerning the scope of humane work in the United States. Moreover, he did not conceal his skepticism or ambivalence about the vitality and effectiveness of the humane movement's constituent organizations. McCrea devoted less than a dozen of his 325-page work to discussion of trends in humane education. According to William Stillman, General Carpentier himself bitterly condemned the resulting work.56

Two years later, New York activist Diana Belais launched a public attack on Columbia and its use of the bequest. Belais asserted that the terms of the gift had specified more active and practical contributions to the work of animal protection than such scholarly reviews of past humane efforts could provide. Lindsay answered her charge of malfeasance in an interview with the New York Herald, insisting that Columbia had acted to “further such efforts to promote humane education as would normally come within the scope of a university enterprise.” The Columbia committee concluded that “the improvement of the instruction of young children in the primary schools in the sentiment of kindliness and consideration for each other and in their duty toward the lower animals would be one means of carrying out the wishes of the donor.” Another means, Lindsay suggested, “was in the improvement, unification, and coordination of the

legislation of the several states of the nation in statutory enactments, giving expression to the crystallized sentiment of the people on the subject of the protection of animals and . . . of the aged, of children, and of criminals, in all of which . . . the humane factor plays an important part.57

Thus, the Columbia committee adopted a broad and convenient definition of humane education that included the study of benevolent legislation in such areas as humane society work, prison reform, the care of the poor, and the treatment of international prisoners. At the same time, it ruled out any notion of a program for studying children’s ideas and attitudes toward animals and the proper methods and techniques for encouraging humane values. Lindsay implicitly disparaged this approach with his remark to the 1913 AHA convention that the university was not fitted “to carry on propaganda.”58

An appropriate option within the university was available. Columbia’s Teachers’ College was the center of progressive education, granting one third of all doctorates in education through the 1920s, and might have served as a center for the development, review, and promulgation of techniques of humane instruction. Had Carpentier’s gift been assigned to Teachers’ College for such work, the university could have been a pioneer in the assessment of humane education’s social value and in refinement of its


58 AHA, Ann. R. 1913, 26. Lindsay also spoke at the AHA convention the following year. See AHA, Ann. R. 1914, 31.
methods and content. As it was, the field atrophied and received little or no attention from institutions devoted to the study and enhancement of American pedagogy.

Humanitarian complaints resurfaced in the early 1920s as a new Lindsay protégé, Columbia graduate student William J. Shultz, commenced research for another study. *The Humane Movement in the United States 1910-1922,* based on Shultz’s doctoral dissertation, appeared in 1924, and was conceived as a chronological extension of McCrea’s work. Shultz made greater effort to account for developments in humane education than McCrea, asserting as part of his thesis that it had in fact “been the most important development in animal welfare since 1910.” Still, Shultz’s work offered a mostly superficial engagement with the subject. Shultz noted that the previous fifteen years (1908-1923) had seen “a growing movement to include humane education in school curricula, and to have it taught in an organized manner in the classroom.” At the 1922 AHA convention, Shultz noted, the ASPCA Humane Education department displayed a banner with the slogan “Humane Education in Every State by 1925.”

The Bergh Foundation remained the subject of ongoing commentary in the pages of humane journals, and Lindsay himself appeared at the 1923 annual convention of the AHA to defend its work. Of that occasion, Francis Rowley recorded that queries about the inappropriate use of the fund, now fifteen years old, went unanswered. Rowley, Mary F. Lovell, and other humanitarians frequently complained that Carpentier had contemplated more practical efforts to further the cause, and they deplored the “lack of

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actual work to promote humane education” through the foundation in the years since his bequest.60

In fall 1925, humanitarian concern about malfeasance and/or ineptitude in the administration of the fund again boiled over into the press. Writing to Lindsay, New York advocate Georgiana Kendall questioned the statistical, legal, and retrospective emphasis of the several monographs thus far issued. “Barring the compilation of facts generally known,” Kendall lamented, “so little, if anything of value seemed to have been done to further General Carpentier’s educational program of disseminating by lectures, prizes, and publications the humanitarian principles he had so deeply at heart.” At the October 6 annual meeting of the AHA in Toledo, delegates adopted a resolution protesting the university’s failure to honor the donor’s wishes. Nicholas Murray Butler publicly denied any malfeasance.61

President Butler was brief and non-responsive to inquiries about whether there was any likelihood that Columbia would expand its efforts in the realm of humane education of youth. “A great many persons seem to misunderstand the nature and purpose of this fund owing to the fact that it was named in honor of Henry Bergh,” Butler informed one humane advocate. “The use which is being made of the fund is in precise accordance with General Carpentier’s wishes and was arranged with his full knowledge and approval.” Butler and Lindsay never shared with their correspondents any record of


the agreement with Carpentier to corroborate their personal vouchsafes that the donor's wishes were being followed.\(^6^2\)

Thus, apart from the staging of a series of lectures in 1911 on the range of humane topics outlined by Lindsay, the outcome of the Columbia gift involved the production of eight monographs, six of which surveyed animal protection work and legislation. These included the works by McCrea and Shultz, Lindsay’s own "Legislation for the Protection of Animals and Children," Floyd Morse Hubbard’s two digests of anti-cruelty law, and Marion Soteman Krows’s "The Hounds of Hastings," a breezy local case study of humane work. Hubbard’s digests were dry compendia of humane legislation. Krows covered general humane activity in her book but devoted one chapter, “Bending the Twig,” to humane education. The other works authorized by Lindsay focused on the treatment of prisoners.\(^6^3\)

The Columbia initiative was a missed opportunity. Had the gift been differently deployed, it might have centered on the review and validation of teaching methods and content, on the resolution of differences between nature-study, science education, and humane education, and on the institutionalization of kindness to animals in the

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\(^{62}\) Georgiana Kendall to Samuel McCune Lindsay, Sept. 8, 1925, in Lindsay Papers, Box 36; "Miscellaneous" Folder, and Belle Eddy Storrs to Nicholas Murray Butler, Dec. 30, 1925, and Nicholas Murray Butler to Belle Eddy Storrs, Dec. 31, 1925, in Lindsay Papers, Box 36, “S” Folder.

William Stillman believed that a more appropriate use of the fund would have been for the formation of "a national school for educating humane workers [and especially humane educators] along humane lines." Indeed, as early 1909, Hugo Krause, Superintendent of Chicago's Anti-Cruelty Society, had written Lindsay's associate Roswell McCrea with a similar recommendation.

At least a few researchers believed that humane education was a proper subject for academic investigation in the pre-World War II era. In 1931, concern for animals found its way onto the agenda of the Conference of Educational Associations, whose members came together annually to discuss educational theory and practice in Great Britain. That year, Susan Isaacs, chairman of the British Psychological Society's Education Section, spoke about her research concerning childhood socialization and attitudes concerning animals. Her method, applied in a small Cambridge school during the years 1924-1927, permitted children the greatest possible freedom to pursue their own interests.

In her research, Isaacs paid special attention to the conflicting tendencies toward cruelty and kindness to animals that she observed in children. "The problem of dealing with the contradictory impulses of the child is more difficult because of the great inconsistencies of grown-up standards," Isaacs wrote. "They are surprisingly confused and contradictory, and it is worth while trying to realize what effect they may have on the

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minds of children who are struggling to order and control their own conflicting impulses.\textsuperscript{65}

Isaacs proposed that educators should strive "to make a positive educational use of the child's impulses" so that children could be helped to reach "a more satisfactory psychological solution for their own internal conflicts." This method of instruction, she asserted, would become "an active influence in the building up of a positive morality of behavior towards animals, going beyond the mere negative standard of not being unkind to them, and expressed in an eager and intelligent interest in their life-histories, and a lively sympathy with their doings and happenings."\textsuperscript{66}

Isaacs's investigations yielded some compelling results, based on her openness concerning two areas of common contention, "[the] order in which plant and animal life should be dealt with, and [the] fields of fact which are acceptable to the little child, and educationally valuable."\textsuperscript{67} She argued that the study of animals was a more genuinely biological discipline than botany, noting that emphasis on the latter had frequently been based on the desire to instruct children—indirectly—on the sexual function.\textsuperscript{68} Isaacs also sought to challenge dogmas surrounding what facts children should be taught, and by what means. Her special focus was on children's exposure to the death of animals, and


\textsuperscript{66} Isaacs, Intellectual Growth, 164, 166.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 159.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 168-70.
on dissection, a practice she gave her young subjects limitless opportunities in which to participate. The children she observed “showed greater sympathy with the living animals, and more consistent care, after they had ‘looked inside’ the dead ones, and fewer lapses into experimental cruelty,” Isaacs reported. “In other words, the impulse to master and destroy was taken up into the aim of understanding. The living animal became much less of an object of power and possession, and much more an independent creature to be learnt about, watched and known for its own sake.”69 Isaacs found that the children moved steadily towards the non-interfering, observational attitude of many modern naturalists, and developed a humane outlook and sense of responsibility toward their pets and towards animals in general.

Obviously, these findings, gathered in one school, could not be considered broadly representative or conclusive. Nevertheless, the very singularity of the approach taken by Isaacs and her colleagues makes one thing clear. Fruitful research on children’s psychological development and its bearing on the methods by which an attitude of respect and interest in animals could be inculcated had, despite the attention and resources directed toward the objects of humane education, been a neglected pursuit.

Conclusion

Virtually unlimited faith in the influence of humane education was a keystone of animal protection in the United States between 1866 and 1932. The humane movement pinned its hopes on education as the remedy to cruel treatment of animals by future generations. In the early twentieth century, arguments in favor of increased emphasis on

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69 Ibid., 165-66.
education as distinct from practical relief work for animals surfaced regularly. If actively pursued, the emphasis on humane education promised to shift the balance of humane work. As an Our Dumb Animals editorialist, probably Rowley, optimistically predicted, “more and more societies organized for the prevention of cruelty to animals will turn to the work of humane education . . . as their widest and most important field of service. Train the heart of the child aright, and the cruelty from which animals suffer will end far more quickly than by punishing the ignorant and cruel man.”

In some ways, this editorial foretold the long-term decline of humane advocacy in the United States, as the burdens of shelter and hospital work, animal control obligations, and law enforcement cast many other initiatives, including humane education, to the margins of activity. In 1922, Francis Rowley speculated that the promise of immediate results was what kept so many humane advocates involved in direct relief of animals rather than humane education of future generations.

Whatever the case, humane education did not become more central to the work of SPCAs in the years that followed; by the era of the Depression it had greatly diminished. What survived was the simple lesson of kindness to pets, carried into the schools by SPCA staff members and volunteers who continued to enjoy access to the earliest grades of elementary school. The transformations that eliminated the abuse of horses and other humane concerns from Americans’ daily experience rendered obsolete much of the earlier practical education concerning animal welfare. At the same time, the movement’s

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70 “Humane Education--The Need of the Hour,” ODA 52 (July 1919), 26.

71 “Running Into Millions,” ODA 54 (Jan. 1922), 120.
educational focus, normally centered on acts of individual cruelty, failed to touch upon newer and often more controversial forms of animal use. Both self-censorship and the constraints imposed by educational institutions prevented humane education from reaching into the realm of the new cruelties—institutionalized uses of animals that were well beyond the experience and influence of most individuals. Undoubtedly, too, the disillusionment wrought by war, depression, and other events deflated the grand claims and expectations expressed by Gilded Age and Progressive era animal protectionists.

These considerations render the success of the campaign for compulsory humane education legislation highly ironic. Its clear relationship to moral instruction and the inculcation of good citizenship was endorsed in state houses all across America. Paradoxically, however, the determination to see such laws passed was not matched by commensurate effort to see them honored. In many states, the legal requirement for humane education proved to be a dead letter, and in 1919 one MSPCA author (probably Rowley) challenged local humane societies to keep the issue alive before their boards of education. The humane education initiative was only ever as strong as the network of supporters it garnered. In states like Rhode Island, where an independent branch of the AHES was formed and remained viable for some years, continuing progress was recorded. In general, however, the cadre of SPCA activists committed to humane education dwindled, and efforts to see its principles enshrined in the curriculum of teachers' institutes and colleges seem to have failed.  

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72 "Compulsory State Humane Education," ODA 52 (June 1919), 24; and "R. I. Humane Education Society," ODA 52 (July 1919), 26.
Ultimately, the difficulty of penetrating local and regional school system bureaucracies proved insurmountable for a movement with limited resources and other concerns and responsibilities. Yet the blame for such failures should not be laid simply on the doorstep of the humane movement itself, for the impact of countervailing forces was decisive. The classroom and the educational system were the subject of increasing struggles during the twentieth century, and the question of how humans ought to encounter and treat animals was implicated in several of these. Humanitarians were not the only ones with an interest in animals. There were 4-H Clubs, industry associations, science education groups, religionists, and alternative perspectives within nature study that also fought for a stake in shaping modern American education. Many of these interests promoted consumptive uses of animals that were increasingly at odds with humane imperatives.\(^{73}\)

Both nature-study and humane education declined in the face of a professionalizing field of science education. That decline is not so much a story of failure on the part of their respective advocates as it is the story of how they were displaced and/or subsumed by a gathering trend toward unification of the science curriculum in the public schools. The rise of a professional science education cadre, committed to the unification, rationalization, and standardization of American science curricula, crowded out both nature-study and humane education, incorporating some of

their elements but ridding them of their romantic notions of affinity with nature and non-human animals. By the 1930s, the term “elementary science” had subsumed “nature-study,” and humane education as a discrete subject of instruction was on the wane.  

The anti-cruelty movement’s overall loss of influence and lack of vitality in the interwar period also had its effect. Humane education suffered as much as any area of organized animal protection from the absence of enlightened and energetic leadership, and the loss of a receptive public. By World War II, organizations were using badly dated humane education materials, if any. Among other tasks, postwar animal protectionists had to ‘start from scratch’ in resurrecting humane education.

This said, humane education in the middle decades of the twentieth century certainly advanced its goals of furthering the ethic of kindness to animals. Some humane education programs, normally attached to major humane societies, survived the movement’s sterile mid-twentieth century decades. While these tended to focus on the treatment of companion animals and the benefits of keeping pets, they nevertheless reinforced the simple message of kindness to animals as an important standard of individual conduct. This work strengthened decades of effort aimed at promoting personal rectitude in dealings with animals. Whatever the level of success on other fronts of humane work, wanton acts of individual cruelty against animal pets have come to be seen as the signs of a maladapted and sick personality. Conversely, a kind disposition toward such animals is considered an important attribute of the well-adjusted

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74 As Philip J. Pauly suggests, the “abstract rationalism” of biology instruction in the higher grades and in university courses also left little room for the empathy-building emphasis of nature study and humane education approaches. See Pauly, *Biologists and the Promise of American Life*, 174.
individual. Humane education has certainly reinforced such ideas about the healthy social and psychological development of humans. Indeed, it is doubtful that such awareness could have coalesced in the absence of a movement that accepted this perspective as a commonplace, and pursued extensive measures to carry the lessons of kindness to generations of American youth.

75 Today, empirical studies confirm the link between hostile treatment of animals and violence against humans, and even without those studies, this link has long been an intuitive conclusion for many Americans. See Randall Lockwood and Frank R. Ascione, eds., *Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1997).