

The Heritage of American Veterinary Medicine is Being Lost

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ABSTRACT: In the United States, there are currently 28 schools of veterinary medicine; 10 were established since 1973. Forty-one veterinary schools are no longer in existence. Only a handful of veterinary schools have libraries that contain the early publications and paper ephemera relating to veterinary medicine in the U.S. Many types of literature have been lost forever. This presentation will examine the several types of literature that has been lost over time. It will illustrate the need to locate, catalogue and preserve what still exists.

Objectives: The objective is to illustrate the types of materials that have been lost, the need to rescue those that are extant and emphasize the importance to preserve them.

Methods: To assess the possible loss of publications and ephemera, WorldCat and the LC Union Catalog were searched to see if any library has holdings from any of the 41 closed schools. In addition, a sampling of holdings of veterinary supply catalogs and patent medicine companies was examined.

Results: The extant primary source materials for the history of veterinary medicine are not widely available. Nearly half of the 41 closed schools have no recorded publications in libraries.

Conclusions: A proactive action plan must to be designed to locate, catalogue and preserve the primary source materials of veterinary medicine for posterity. In addition, veterinary librarians need to archive present day publications from their institutions.

As many of the readers know, it is easier to get into medical school than it is to get into veterinary school. The reason for this is the limited number of veterinary schools in the U.S. There are currently only 28 veterinary schools in the United States as opposed to 130 medical schools.^{1,2} In 1959, there were 18 veterinary schools in the United States.³ From 1973 to 1998, 10 veterinary schools were built. Veterinary scholars assert that James Herriot (James Alfred Wight) created such a phenomenal interest in veterinary medicine with his books that state legislatures were forced to build veterinary schools so their constituents could get a veterinary education.⁴

Unlike medicine or agriculture, where there are many more medical and agriculture libraries, there are only a handful of veterinary libraries to preserve the publication history of the profession. The 18 older veterinary libraries are more likely to have the earlier literature than the more recently established schools. The early veterinary libraries (and the national libraries) either failed to collect and/or retain several kinds of materials that help document the history of the veterinary medicine in the United States.

This paper will examine some of the types of journals, books, catalogs and other paper ephemera that have not been actively collected, retained and made accessible. This will include materials issued by former veterinary schools, defunct veterinary associations, house organs, patent

medicine books, supply catalogs. It will then look at the historical value, what is being saved today and offer conclusions and solutions.

Former Veterinary Schools

There are 41 former schools of veterinary medicine.⁵ Most of these schools were private and lasted no more than 6-10 years. The earliest school was established in 1852. The last of these former schools closed its doors in 1947. The publications, if they exist at all today, of these 41 schools are scarce.

An in-depth survey was conducted in OCLC's WorldCat (which includes National Library of Medicine items), Library of Congress (LC) Online Catalog and the printed *Dictionary Catalog of the National Agricultural Library, 1862-1965*. The results of the survey revealed that eighteen of the former veterinary schools had no holdings. There were a total of only 67 different items for the remaining 23 schools. Of those 67 items, 42 items (62.69%) were owned by only one library. NAL holds 16 (23.88%) of the 67 items, 9 (13.43%) are held by NLM and 10 (14.93%) are held by LC. Of the items owned by only 1 library, 7 (16.67%) are found in veterinary libraries, 4 (9.53%) in NAL, 5 (11.90%) in NLM, 3 (7.14%) in LC. The largest percentage (54.76%) was found to be in other types of libraries (historical societies, state libraries and academic libraries). The scattered nature of these holdings presents a special challenge to the access and preservation of these materials.

Table 1. Former Veterinary Schools

	Name & Location of Veterinary School	Year Established	Year Closed	Number of Items Held By:				
				OCLC/LC/NAL	Single Library	NAL	NLM	LC
1.	Veterinary College of Philadelphia	1852	1859	4	4	0	0	0
2.	Boston (MA) Veterinary Institute	1854	1860	1	0	0	1	0
3.	New York College of Veterinary Surgeons (NYC)	1857	1899	10	4	1	1	0
4.	Veterinary Institute of Chicago (ILL)	1864	ca1869	NONE	0	0	0	0
5.	Pennsylvania College of Veterinary Surgeons (Philadelphia)	1866	1870	1	1	0	0	0
6.	St. Louis (Mo) Veterinary College	ca1875	ca1875	NONE	0	0	0	0
7.	American Veterinary College (New York, NY)	1875	1899	5	4	1	1	1
8.	Columbia Veterinary College (New York, NY)	1877	1884	1	0	0	0	0
9.	Minnesota College Hospital Veterinary College (Minneapolis)	1881	1890	NONE	0	0	0	0
10.	Harvard University Veterinary Dept. (Boston, MA)	1882	1902	5	2	0	0	3
11.	Chicago (ILL) Veterinary College	1883	1920	4	3	2	1	0
12.	New Jersey Veterinary College (Trenton)	ca1887	ca1887	NONE	0	0	0	0
13.	University of South Carolina, Division of Veterinary Medicine	1888	1891	NONE	0	0	0	0
14.	Baltimore (MD.) University School of Veterinary Medicine	1889	1891	NONE	0	0	0	0
15.	Detroit (MI) College of Veterinary Medicine Dept.	1890	1899	NONE	0	0	0	0
16.	Iowa Veterinary College (Des Moines)	1890	1894	NONE	0	0	0	0
17.	Kansas City (MO) Veterinary College	1891	1918	4	3	1	1	1
18.	Kentucky State College Veterinary Dept. (Lexington)	1891	1895	NONE	0	0	0	0
19.	Ohio Veterinary College (Cincinnati)	1891	1896	1	0	0	0	0
20.	Indiana Veterinary College (Indianapolis)	1892	1924	4	2	2	0	0
21.	McKillop Veterinary College (Chicago, ILL)	1894	1920	3	1	1	0	0
22.	National Veterinary College (Washington, DC)	1892	1896	1	1	0	1	0

23.	United States College of Veterinary Dept. (Washington, DC)	1894	1927	2	1	1	1	1
24.	University of California San Francisco (CA) Veterinary College	1895	1899	NONE	0	0	0	0
25.	Columbian University Veterinary Dept. (Washington, DC)	1896	1898	1	1	0	1	0
26.	Grand Rapids (MI) Medical College Veterinary Dept.	1897	1918	6	4	2	0	0
27.	Western Veterinary College (Kansas City, MO)	1897	1908	NONE	0	0	0	0
28.	New York University New York – American Veterinary College (NYC)	1899	1913	2	2	0	0	0
29.	San Francisco (CA) Veterinary College	1899	1918	3	2	1	0	0
30.	Collins Veterinary College (Nashville, TN)	ca1899	ca1899	NONE	0	0	0	0
31.	Cincinnati (Ohio) Veterinary College	1900	1920	NONE	0	0	0	0
32.	University Veterinary College (Kansas City, MO)	1902	1906	NONE	0	0	0	0
33.	St. Joseph (MO) Veterinary College	1905	1923	2	2	0	0	2
34.	West Virginia University Veterinary Dept. (Morgantown)	1905	1912	NONE	0	0	0	0
35.	George Washington University College of Veterinary Medicine (Washington, DC)	1908	1918	1	1	0	0	1
36.	Terre Haute (IN) Veterinary College	1909	1918	NONE	0	0	0	0
37.	Southwestern Veterinary College (Dallas, TX)	1909	1916	1	1	0	0	0
38.	Arkansas Veterinary College (Fayetteville)	1913	1921	NONE	0	0	0	0
39.	New York University New York State Veterinary College (NYC)	1913	1922	3	3	2	0	1
40.	University of Georgia State College of Agriculture Division of Veterinary Medicine (Athens)	1918	1933	NONE	0	0	0	0
41.	Middlesex University School of Veterinary Medicine (Waltham, MA)	1938	1947	2	0	2	1	0
	<i>Totals</i>			67	42	16	9	10

What types of materials did these schools produce? One can easily assume that the schools had catalogs or prospectuses, journals, yearbooks, class lecture notes, photographs of the school, graduation photographs, stationery and other ephemera. For example, the OCLC holdings for the Grand Rapids Veterinary College are an example of what might have been produced by these schools. Cataloged for this school were an annual prospectus, three published books of lecture

notes, a journal called the *Veterinary Standard* and an archival collection containing photographs, diplomas and booklets.

Defunct Veterinary Associations

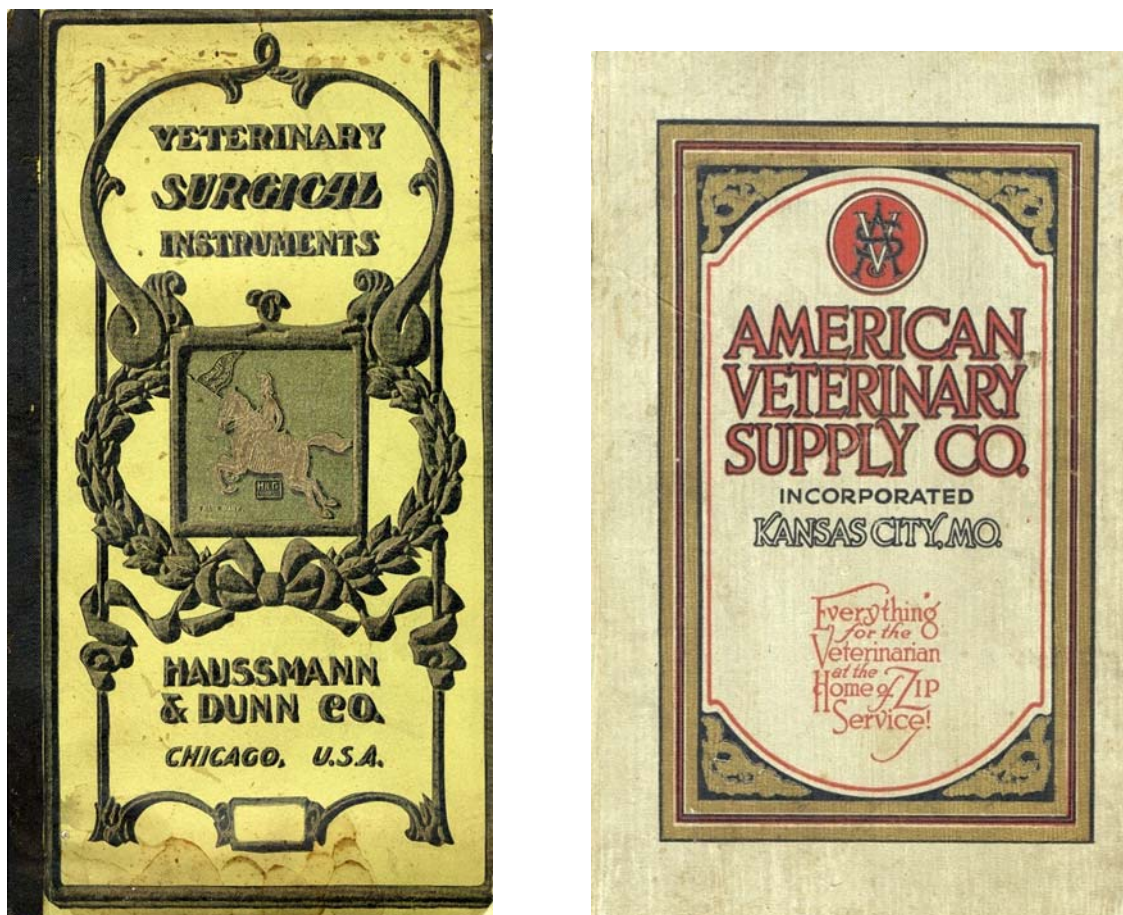
No source has been identified that provides a historical listing of the local, regional, and national veterinary associations/societies that have existed in the United States. A quick survey in the *American Veterinary Review* for the time period 1885-1900 yielded the names of at least 19 defunct associations such as the Alumni Association of the American Veterinary College, Association of Veterinary Faculties of North America, Association of the Bureau of Animal Industry Veterinarians and the German Veterinary Association of New York. Societies have survived or evolved or merged into other associations while others simply ceased to exist. What happened to their archives? A few published a journal, such as the *Missouri Valley Veterinary Bulletin* (Missouri Valley Veterinary Association), but most of the history and membership rolls of these organizations are gone. A proactive effort has been undertaken to save the records of present day associations. The Special Collections Unit of the Iowa State University Library has been soliciting such records since the late 1970's. One can see they have been reasonably successful by looking at their holdings: <http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/collections/VM.html>.

Veterinary Supply Catalogs

Very few veterinary supply catalogs have been retained, yet they document the instruments and medications used by early veterinarians. They are particularly useful to identify early instruments and their purpose. A list of United States supply catalogs, regardless of date, was compiled from WorldCat and LC Online Catalog using the subject headings "Veterinary Instruments and Apparatus – Catalogs," "Veterinary Surgery –Instruments-Catalogs" and "Veterinary Medicine – Supplies-Catalogs" (see Table 2). The search yielded 77 extant catalogs of which 64 are different, dating from 1881 to 2004. Of the 64 catalogs, only 9 (14.06%) were held by more than one library. Forty-four of the 77 catalogs (57.14%) were held by veterinary libraries with one veterinary library holding 22 catalogs. Several of the companies published multiple editions of their catalogs, but the table reveals many of the different editions are missing from or not found in library collections. Even more telling is the fact that the modern day veterinary catalogs such as from Henry Schein Inc. and Sontec Instruments are not being retained.

At some point in time the present day catalogs will be sought out for historical purposes and there will be few available. The early catalogs (see Figure 1) are scarce, popular amongst collectors and frequently bring high prices when sold.

Figure 1. Examples of Veterinary Supply Catalogs^{7,8}



House Organs

Many of the veterinary drug manufacturers produced high quality journals containing scientific articles as well as news about the veterinary profession. Examples of these are the *Jen-Sal Journal*, *Allied Veterinarian*, and *Veterinary Excerpts*. None of these has been indexed, yet the evolution of the veterinary profession in the United States could easily be documented through these publications for the time periods they were published. The holdings on these three titles are particularly good since some medical libraries also own them. These publications are ripe for digitization. OCR (optical character recognition) scanning would make the information in them readily available to researchers.

There are also other house organs where very few issues remain. Two examples are *The Veterinarian* (Pitman Moore Co.) and *Veterinary Notes* (Parke, Davis & Co.). Neither one of these titles is in WorldCat. Is it even possible to find all of the issues to put together a complete set of either title?

As most librarians know, house organs are always difficult to collect, even in today's world. The drug companies send them to practitioners but not to libraries. *Pro veterinario* and *Swine Consultant* are two examples from the 1980's. OCLC reflects that only two libraries in the world own either title. The author does receive interlibrary loan requests for articles from them, so they are cited in the literature. We must be ever vigilant to add this type of grey literature to our collections.

Patent Medicine

Another area of veterinary literature that librarians have ignored is patent medicine (also called quack medicine) pamphlets, brochures, booklets, and journals. There are 3 or 4 major veterinary rare book collections in the U.S., but even these collections have few, if any, patent medicine booklets in them.^{9, 10}

These books were an important fabric of our social history (see Figure 2). The testimonials of what these products could do were extraordinary. It was even better when the product cured both "man & beast." Most of the patent medicine companies began to disappear with the passage of the Pure Food & Drug Act of 1906.¹¹ A few of the patent medicine companies survived even into later years, but were very careful in making claims of what their products could do.

Figure 2. Examples of Patent Medicine Books^{14, 15}



The books were printed on very cheap acidic paper, so the ones that remain in existence are slowly disintegrating and are frequently very brittle. Many are in immediate need of receiving preservation treatment and/or being digitized.

In order to achieve some idea of how much of this type of literature is in libraries, the author looked at the “Spotlight” feature column in the issues of *Veterinary Collectibles Roundtable*.¹⁶ Sixty of the columns have been focused on a specific veterinary medicine patent medicine company. Each of these companies was searched in WorldCat, LC Online Catalog and the *Dictionary Catalog of the National Agricultural Library, 1862-1965*. Nineteen of the sixty companies were not found. Further analysis reveals that there were 316 unique items with 887 holdings in libraries for the other 41 companies. Institutions with veterinary libraries held 195 (61.71%) of the items and 183 (57.91%) of the items were held by only one library. Again these figures illustrate the relative scarcity of this type of material. In many instances the only holding library is a local or state historical society or state library where the business had been located. If a company had produced many books such as Pratt’s or Dr. Daniel’s or Dr. LeGear, then several representative publications were more likely to be found with several holdings attached. Even then, the author knows of publications from several of these companies not to be found in OCLC or of companies not yet featured in *Veterinary Collectibles Roundtable* for which no holdings are to be found in OCLC.

Historical Value of the Material

The early college catalogs frequently contained graduation lists, photographs of the institution, information about the faculty. They contained a wealth of information which may now be lost forever. There is a need to create an awareness of the scarcity of the early veterinary literature and to carefully evaluate before weeding an item. If it is decided to withdraw the item from the collection, then offer it to other libraries.

An author of a book on a history of a state veterinary association told the author this paper about the difficulties he had in finding primary source material. The state association had destroyed various records instead of archiving them because no one in the association had a sense of history and value of the information to future generations.

Over the past 39 years, the author has frequently used the early veterinary literature and textbooks to answer questions ranging from genealogy to verifying facts of veterinary history. While some libraries have weeded older editions of standard textbooks, the author finds earlier editions still have value to document the changes in veterinary treatments. For example, one fascinating question the author received was “what was the origin of the normal temperature values of the dog and cat.”

What Is Being Saved At Your Institution?

Perhaps the most insidious problem facing not only the present day veterinary librarian but all librarians, is collecting items from your own institution. Many of the readers have experienced receiving a request for a publication from their institution that they did not realize existed. One

must not be hesitant to pester the administration with the need for copies of college publications for the archives.

A few years ago the author's institution published an illustrated history of the college. What emerged from the project was the dearth of photographs available to use. Photographs had been taken, but not retained.

At the author's institution some of the things evaluated for the archives include: programs from various college events, college catalogs, posters announcing upcoming events, extension publications, brochures, newsletters, journals, photographs, books (including fictional novels) written by alumni of the College, Christmas cards and 3-d items such as key chains, pencils, magnets, special event t-shirts, Christmas ornaments, bracelets, etc.

The author's institution has eliminated the weekly calendar of events. Most of the news stories and event announcements are now being published on the college's website. Do you know what your institution is doing to archive electronic materials? The electronic age is creating new challenges to archiving the history of an institution. Imagine a person in 2050 or 2100 trying to do a history of the current time period of a college if the institution is not capturing the electronic media through snap shots of the website or some other means. There will be little documentation of what the college is currently doing if such actions aren't undertaken.

It is incumbent upon us to be ever vigilant in collecting and preserving the output of the present day veterinary colleges.

Conclusions and Solutions

Veterinary medicine is very fortunate that, in September of 2007, a group of seven veterinary medical librarians organized to form the Veterinary Archives Grey Literature Steering Group (known as V-Ags) with the express purpose to identify (including hidden archives), collect and preserve the grey literature and archival materials (past and present) pertaining to veterinary medicine. Amongst the goals of the organization is to mentor the next generation of veterinary librarians to make them aware of the early literature of veterinary medicine and how few copies exist of much of the materials.

It is not known how much early American veterinary literature/ephemera can still be found. There are most likely things in hidden collections in libraries and museums. The author is aware that many of the types of items described in this article occasionally appear on eBay and knows they are also in private collectors' hands. Much of what is in private collections is unique and undocumented. A concerted effort should be made to purchase these items whenever they appear on eBay or through other resources. If a private collection is known, the librarian should cultivate a relationship with the owner in hopes that someday the owner might donate the collection to the library or make it available for sale to the library instead of dispersing the collection to the unknown. Given the fragility of some of the material, it is important to store them in archives where they can be properly preserved.

Over the years, there have been various types of veterinary materials that have fallen below the radar of collection development librarians. Suggestions for immediate actions have been included throughout this paper. The time is ripe for veterinary librarians and other interested parties to start investigating ways to inventory and make known what is hidden in their archives. A database, or a registry, of all known items should be created. Perhaps the libraries could work together to complete runs of journals where no one library has a complete run of a title. Items not owned by any library should be actively sought out. Unique, one of a kind, items should be immediately digitized and preserved for posterity. If no action is taken, many more items in the public realm will continue to be unknowingly destroyed. Librarians working individually, and in concert, can make a difference in recovering and preserving some of the heritage of veterinary medicine.

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