

American Veterinary Medical History Society

"Devoted to the Diffusion of Veterinary History"

Vintage Veterinary Instrument #3

Equine Tail Docking Shears --- 19th century



The attached photo is of a tail docking instrument. It is 20 in. long and weighs approx. five pounds.

It is used to remove most of the coccygeal vertebrae in the horse's tail while leaving some of the tail vertebrae to allow the horse to move its tail. The reason for this surgical procedure was to prevent the horse in using his tail to "grab" the reins out the hands of the ladies when they were driving a buggy or other light horse-drawn vehicle.

This veterinary instrument is currently on display with the VET2011 exhibit at Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine in East Lansing (<https://cvm.msu.edu/vetschool-tails/a-horse-of-course>). It is on loan from the Veterinary Museum at the Galloway House & Village, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Instrument and description provided by Fred J. Born, DVM (Fond du Lac, Wisconsin), January 29, 2018.