

History of Early Veterinary Colleges in California: Part 2

San Francisco Veterinary College, 1899–1918

Susanne K. Whitaker

As the Veterinary Department of the University of California at San Francisco was closing due to low enrollment and financial difficulties after less than 5 years of operation, a second private school was being chartered in 1899 in San Francisco by Dr. E.J. Creely.^{1,2,3} Given the large horse population in the city, there was a continuing need for educated veterinarians on the Pacific coast to care for urban working horses and some companion animals as well as to address public health concerns. This school would remain in operation for nearly 20 years before ceasing after World War I.

Edward J. Creely, DVS

Edward John Creely (1867–1929) (Fig. 1) was born in Stockton, California. He was the first son of James Creely (1844–1915) and Margaret “Maggie” McCarty Creely (1848–1898). James had been born in Ballymacnab, County Armagh while Margaret was from Aghabullogue, a small village in County Cork. They separately immigrated from Ireland to the United States before meeting and marrying in Stockton.^{4,5,6} Moving his family to San Francisco in 1870, James Creely continued working as a horseshoer or farrier. Edward grew up in his father’s busy shoeing shop on Mission Street.



Figure 1. “Edward J. Creely, looking pious. This is a tintype taken on August 4th, 1884 at Vans Department store, 111 4th street in San Francisco.” Source: Creely E. *Edward Creely and the changing city, 1870-1920*, Pt. 1: The cattle raids of Creely. [blog] Posted June 16, 2019. <https://dinshenchas.wordpress.com/category/san-francisco/>

He attended schools in San Francisco and at St. Ignatius College before enrolling at the American Veterinary College in New York City from 1888 to 1890, receiving his DVS degree in 1890.⁷ He had worked his way through veterinary school by selling watermelons on city streets and washing Pullman cars.⁸

In a *New York Times* report of his 1890 Commencement, it was reported that “Edward John Creeley [sic] of San Francisco obtained the gold medal for having passed the best practical examination before a committee appointed by the Faculty

Edward John Creeley,
D. V. S., 90.
b. San Francisco, Cal., Jun. 24, 1867;
Am. Vet. Coll., 88-90; ex-chief, vet.,
U. S. Govt., Præsidio Reservation; pres.,
San Francisco Vet. Coll.; sec., Cal. State
Bd. Vet. Examiners; ex-vetern., San
Francisco Health Dept.
137 Haight St., San Francisco, Cal.

Figure 2. Listing in the New York University 1833-1906 alumni catalog. Source: New York University; Brown HM, ed. *General alumni catalogue of New York University, 1833-1906...* New York: General Alumni Society, 1906; p. 224. *HathiTrust Digital Library*; <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112112220972>

from among the local veterinary experts.” Along with his sheepskin diploma, it was announced at the commencement that the College’s [207] graduates would now be recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture and could attend a French veterinary school without examination and earn a diploma within a year.^{9,10} (The school’s graduates would later be accepted as alumni of New York University. [Fig. 2]) Thereafter, Dr. Creely “accepted a position as night surgeon for the Third Avenue Surface R[ailwa]y Co. of New York City, where he had charge of 4,500 horses.”¹¹

Veterinary Hospital Established

Upon returning to California by early 1891, Dr. Creely first practiced out of his father’s blacksmith shop on Tehama Street in San Francisco before opening his first veterinary hospital with partner Mulford Ludllam Pancoast, a stonecutter by trade, on Golden Gate Avenue. There he “engaged in active general practice, building up a wonderful business” that catered specifically to the urban horse population. Called the New York Veterinary Hospital, it was located at 510 Golden Gate Avenue and “was reputed to be far superior to any other in the community.”¹² Arburua specified, “It contained a horse operating table, perhaps the first in the West, and within a year E.J. installed a telephone: an invention possessed by no other San Francisco veterinarian at the time.”¹³

There were a number of veterinary practices located along that avenue from Hyde to Webster Streets. Isaac O’Rourke, who specialized in equine dentistry, was located at 331 Golden Gate Avenue, followed within one block by F.A. Nief at 434, Creely at 510, and another veterinary dentist Ira Dalziel at number 605. The San Francisco Veterinary Hospital was

the last one furthest west at 1117, close to the intersection of Golden Gate and Webster Streets. This hospital was owned by Drs. William F. Egan and Peter Burns. Egan was Creely's landlord and owned the property at 510 Golden Gate. With respect to a glanders scare in 1892, "both Egan and Burns would later become antagonists of Creely."¹⁴

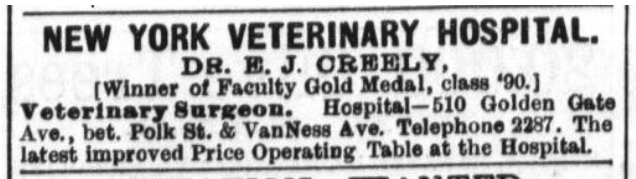


Figure 3. First advertisement for Dr. Creely's hospital. *Pacific Rural Press*. 41(4):85, 1891 Jan 24. UCR. Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research, California Digital Newspaper Collection. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=PRP18910124&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1>



Figure 4. "Dr. Edward Creely in front of the New York Veterinary Hospital, 510 Golden Gate Avenue in 1892 ready to admit an injured horse. Creely is in the doorway wearing a bowler hat, white shirt and vest. Note the ambulance for 'disabled horses'." Picture courtesy Kathy Creely. From: Creely E. *Edward Creely and the Changing City, 1870 – 1920*, Pt. 2: The great glanders epidemic of 1892 [blog]. Posted January 4, 2020. <https://dinnshenchas.wordpress.com/category/san-francisco/>



Figure 5. "New York Veterinary Hospital, 510 Golden Gate Ave, San Francisco, CA circa 1892." Picture courtesy Kathy Creely. From: Creely E. *Edward Creely and the Changing City, 1870 – 1920*, Pt. 2: The great glanders epidemic of 1892 [blog]. Posted January 4, 2020. <https://dinnshenchas.wordpress.com/category/san-francisco/>

"The first announcement [that] the New York Veterinary Hospital was open for business ran on January 24, 1891 in the *Pacific Rural Press* (Fig. 3), a paper for farmers and agricultural businesses in [Northern] California. Seven days later, Dr. Creely made the news for his feat of fitting a draft horse suffering from ocular cancer with a glass eye, earning the gratitude of the horse's owner, Le Roy Brundage, who didn't want to lose the entire animal for lack of an eyeball."¹⁵ (Figs. 4-6)

"Two years later [about 1893] he opened the American Veterinary Hospital on Howard Street in partnership with Dr. John Campbell...It was as modern and well equipped as the first hospital. That facility closed after Dr. Campbell left the practice the following year."¹⁶ Also in 1893, Dr. Creely was awarded license no. 8 from the State Board of Veterinary Examiners.¹⁷

Founding a Veterinary College

During the 7 years after receiving his veterinary degree in New York, Dr. Creely had "a cherished dream" of founding a veterinary school in California. He had been a former student who "remained a favorite protégé of Dr. Alexander Liautard, the acknowledged father of veterinary education in this country," dean of the American Veterinary College, and editor of the *American Veterinary Review*.¹⁸

In fulfilling this goal, a charter for a private veterinary college was obtained from the state in 1898.^{19,20} On April 28, 1899, Edward J. Creely, Mulford L. Pancoast, H.M. Stanford, Joseph Sullivan, and John Murray filed articles of incorporation with the state, which officially founded the San Francisco College of Veterinary Surgeons and Dentists at 510 Golden Gate.^{21,22}

As one of the first and youngest graduates of the previous Veterinary Department of the University of California at San Francisco in 1897, Dr. Charles F. Keane (Fig. 7) "served as president of the San Francisco Veterinary College from 1905 to 1917 and was professor of communicable disease and of meat inspection, two subjects of which he was a master and certainly most qualified to teach."^{23,24} In addition, Dr. Keane



Figure 6. "Dr. Edward Creely wearing an apron surrounded by his students in his 'operative surgery' on June 24th, 1892." Photo courtesy Kathy Creely. From: Creely E. *Edward Creely and the Changing City, 1870 – 1920*, Pt. 2: The great glanders epidemic of 1892 [blog]. Posted January 4, 2020. <https://dinnshenchas.wordpress.com/category/san-francisco/>



Figure 7. Charles F. Keane, DVS (1874-1950).
Source: Arburua JM. *Calif Vet.* 1950. p. 262.

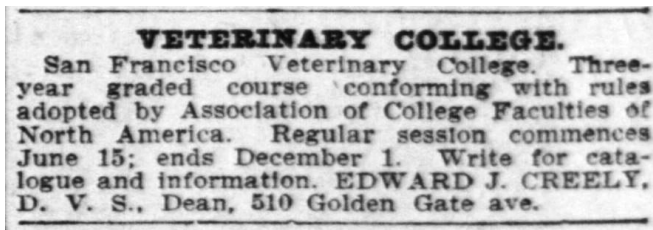


Figure 8. [Advertisement for the] Veterinary College. *San Francisco Call.* 94(17):14, 1903 Jun 17. *California Digital Newspaper Collection*, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SFC19030617.2.115.3&s-rpos=239&e=-----en--20--221--txt-txIN-%22san+francisco+veterinary+college%22-----1>

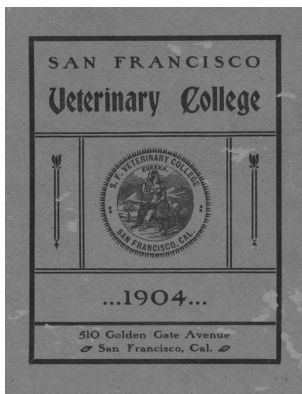


Figure 9. Cover of the San Francisco Veterinary College Prospectus, 1904, 510 Golden Gate Ave.

was appointed the second California State Veterinarian from 1904 until 1918 and in that role was an effective public health sanitarian in controlling and eradicating various infectious diseases. Dr. Creely was secretary of the school for a time.

Initially, night and evening classes were convened over Dr. Creely's second floor office and hospital on Golden Gate Avenue, but that instruction soon turned into a popular day program. At first, classes graduated after 2 years of 6 months each, but the curriculum was expanded to 3 collegiate years of 6-months study after 1902. (Fig. 8)

Costs were also reasonable, even for the times. First-year students paid a matriculation fee of \$5 along with \$150 for lecture fees each year. The \$40 final examination and diploma fee was paid at the end of the second and final year.^{25,26} When a third year of study was added in 1902, there was no additional lecture charge if students completed all three years at the college. The total cost was \$345 for the 3-year program.

Instruction and Course of Study

In the College's 1902 and 1904 *Prospectus* catalogs,^{27,28} potential applicants were notified of the following 9 facts about the educational program being offered: (Fig. 9)

- “1. **The San Francisco Veterinary College pursues by far the most systematized and extensive methods of practical instruction in all department of any College in America.**
2. **The largest veterinary practice west of Chicago is directly connected with the College.**
3. **Post-mortems** as a means of investigating diseases are of almost daily occurrence at the College.
4. The routine work of the clinical instructors is daily before the eyes of the students.
5. The **curriculum**, dealing exclusively with veterinary subjects, is **comprehensive** and **advanced**.
6. It has attained a high standing among educational institutions, and is indorsed [sic] by the veterinary and medical professions.
7. It offers to students the best opportunity to prepare for the **Government Civil Service Examination** or for active practice.
8. The fees are only nominal, and living expenses are low.
9. The lectures and all instructions are delivered by men of experience, of character and reputation, and of honor and responsibility.”

By the time of the 1914-15 session,²⁹ the College stressed the fact that its graduates were eligible for appointment as Veterinary Inspectors for the US Bureau of Animal Industry and qualified for membership in the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Students received a varied and graded course of instruction in the form of lectures, exercises, quizzes, demonstrations, laboratory investigations, post-mortems, medical clinics, surgical clinics, and outside practice.^{30,31} “The subjects taught included anatomy; physiology; chemistry; bacteriology; surgery; theory and practice of veterinary medicine; dentistry; pathology; diseases of cattle, sheep and swine; obstetrics; cynology (diseases of dogs); and meat inspection...It might be mentioned here that in some other veterinary schools of the era, instruction was strictly limited to the horse.” That meant “such a varied curriculum was considered outstanding in an era when many veterinary schools limited their instruction to equine medicine only.”³² Thus, unlike at those other schools, the Department of Cynology provided a course on diseases of dogs during the senior year which offered exposure to hundreds of canine cases annually.³³

Regarding the Department of Dentistry,³⁴ “recognizing the importance of judicious application of dentistry in the domestic animals and the lucrative field this branch offers to veterinarians the instruction in this department has been perfected to the highest degree.” Lectures and quizzes were “supplemented by the most extensive series of dental clinics ever



Figure 10. “Practical dentistry” clinic at the San Francisco Veterinary College, ca. 1904. Notice shirts, vests, and bowler hats as uniform attire. Source: *1904 San Francisco Veterinary College Prospectus*, p. 27.



Figure 11. San Francisco Veterinary College begins its third session June 10. *Pacific Rural Press*. 61(21):335. 1901 May 25. *California Digital Newspaper Collection*, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=PRP19010525.2.29.1&srpos=45&e=-----en--20--41--txt-txIN-%22san+francisco+veterinary+college%22-----1>

undertaken by a veterinary college.” At those weekly dental clinics, junior and senior students were taught the art of dental diagnosis and use of instruments until each became a proficient expert. (Fig. 10) “Cutting, floating and extracting teeth by the most skillful methods are taught in a manner that leaves no room for improvement.”

Along with anatomical dissection, diagnostic laboratory work, and pharmacy practice, clinical case work included a number of horses, hundreds of dogs, milk cows, and US Army horses at the Presidio Reservation, along with those of all of the carriage, transfer, and draying companies in San Francisco. Thus, as one of the largest practices in San Francisco, Dr. Creely’s New York Veterinary Hospital provided considerable clinical material needed for teaching students. (Figs. 4-5) Surgical lectures and exercises were supplemented by bi-weekly special clinics and daily general clinics given by Dr. Creely himself.³⁵ (Figs. 6 and 11) Students seeking admission were told, “In no other college is surgery so clearly elucidated. It is only necessary to mention the large number of surgical cases met with to clearly define advantages students receive at this branch.”³⁶

Students and Graduates

The first class of four students graduated in 1900, followed by nine in 1901, ten in 1902, and three in 1903. From 1904 to 1918, class size began to grow and by the time the school closed enrollment had increased to nearly forty students in each class.^{37,38} Graduates were awarded D.V.S. degrees as Doctors of Veterinary Surgery.³⁹ As of the *1904 Prospectus*, “the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Dental Surgery is granted only to Juniors who are experts in this particular branch.”⁴⁰

Among those graduates was one woman, Clara Lamplugh, who had come from England. After receiving her degree from the San Francisco Veterinary College in 1917, she became the first woman veterinarian to be licensed to practice in the state that same year. “As late as 1921, Dr. Lamplugh remained the sole woman practitioner on the State Board’s list of licensees.”⁴¹ After conducting her practice from 428 Lily Street for several years, her later presence became unknown.^{42,43,44}

Like other schools at the time, the College required its students to enroll as members and attend weekly meetings for credit of the in-house “Veterinary Medical Association.”^{45,46} That involved students preparing, delivering, and defending essays on topics related to the profession as a means of learning public speaking. To further enrich their educational and cultural experience, students published a *Quarterly Bulletin* for an unknown number of years. Produced entirely by a student editorial board, the 1910-11 issue⁴⁷ included a number of student and faculty papers on clinical and related topics along with news of past graduates. That issue also noted an alumni association had been formed with the hope that graduates would become active members and “take pride in boosting the college...” with pride in the educational foundation provided.

Aside from classes and clinics, Arburua indicated that the school’s social activities for students centered around the Lambda Nu fraternity, known as the “White Bats,” that had been founded by Dr. Archibald Asbill during his student days in 1906. “The gala event of the school year was the annual Bat Banquet, which was attended by many of the older graduates as well as by the students. In the later years, the student body published a little house-organ called ‘The Larynx.’”⁴⁸

Applications for membership in the California State Veterinary Medical Association were referred to its Board of Examiners.⁴⁹ At the CSVMA meeting held in December 1901, Dr. E.J. Creely “was thoroughly questioned...as to the character of his veterinary college, its present and proposed course, etc. Dr. Creely answered all questions in a substantive manner; assured the association that he was and would continue to do all in his power to promote and advance the profession, and requested that the association’s Board of Examiners submit his senior students to an examination before they came before the college faculty for final examinations. After lengthy discussion it was agreed to accept graduates of Dr. Creely’s college into the association.”

From October through December, 1904, a Six-Weeks’ Post-Graduate course was initiated for graduate veterinarians

from recognized veterinary colleges.⁵⁰ Ten lectures were given per week to “demonstrate the most advanced medical and surgical practice in every department.” It is unknown for how many years the graduate course was offered.

After the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire destroyed the building at 510 Golden Gate Avenue (Fig. 12), the hospital and school relocated twice, temporarily to 445 Golden Gate Avenue and finally to 1818 Market Street.^{51,52} (Figs.13 and 14)

Dr. Creely’s Teaching Style

In general, this private school reflected the commitment and personality of its founder. Graduates long remembered Dr. Creely as “one of the most outstanding educators of all time.”⁵³ In particular, Dr. Joseph M. Arburua, DVS (1895–1972), a 1915 SFVC graduate, recalled his teaching style as follows:⁵⁴ (Fig. 15)

“There is no doubt that many veterinarians surpassed ‘E.J.’ in scientific attainments, but it is doubtful whether any were better fitted to impart information to students. He was a forceful speaker, and when he gave a lecture it was an oration, during which the drop of a pin could be heard; such was his command of his listeners’ attention. Most lecturers are reluctant to hint to their classes that they could ever have been in error, but E. J. seemed to delight in dramatic recitations of mistakes he had made through the years. This was his method of instilling in his pupils what they should and should not do. His oft-quoted words: ‘do as I say, not as I have done,’ still ring in the ears of those who went through the school. His pointed and frequently repeated adages were seldom forgotten by the students, and served them well in practice in later years.

Some of his famous sayings were:

Always leave the back door open

Be positive in your opinions and thus don’t arouse your client’s doubt concerning decisions

Never express an opinion until you have made a thorough examination

Many is the time you will wish you had bitten your tongue ere you had spoken

You have an eye on the end of each finger: use it

You have eyes to see with, ears to hear with, a nose to smell with, fingers to feel with: use them all”

But, “perhaps his greatest asset as a tutor was his ability to teach his students how to think.”

In describing the expertise of his instructors, F.H. Guldhager, class of 1911, wrote in the 1910-11 *Quarterly Bulletin*, “The practical work under Dr. Creely is where we have the advantage over other veterinary colleges, for we are getting the benefit of twenty years’ experience of a successful practitioner who is wise to ‘every trick in the trade.’”⁵⁵



Figure 12. “Office of Dr. E.J. Creely, first veterinary hospital in S.F. June or late May, 1906. Golden Gate Ave. (#510), near Polk. Creely is barely visible on the roof of the building.” From the California Historical Society, and available at the Online Archive of California, <https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb1489n86z/?brand=oac4&layout=metadata>



Figure 13. San Francisco Veterinary College, 1818 Market Street, from a postcard dated Nov. 5, 1910. Photo courtesy C. Trenton Boyd.



Figure 14. The San Francisco Veterinary College at 1818 Market Street, near the intersection of Octavia. Dr. Edward J. Creely may be the last man on the left with his hat pushed up. Source: *California Veterinary Medical Association*.



Figure 15. “Class in surgical exercises.” *San Francisco Veterinary College Catalogue, Session 1914-15; p. 2.*

USDA BAI and AVMA Inspection Rating

In response to a survey conducted by the AVMA Committee on Intelligence and Education reported in 1904, a copy of an announcement and letter from the dean of the San Francisco Veterinary College indicated that study was expanded to a 3-year graded course of 6 months after the first session. It was the only school reported to hold its yearly instruction during summer months, June 1 through December 1.⁵⁶ While the school stated, “the standard of the school is as high as possible and they are making improvements all the time regardless of expense,” members of the Committee were doubtful without further independent evidence.

“In 1908 the first inspection of facilities, curricula, and teaching methods in veterinary schools was made by a committee appointed by the US Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI). The San Francisco Veterinary College was [visited on March 17 and was one of four private commercial enterprises] rated as an ‘A’ school. This rating was maintained until it closed.”^{57,58,59} This rating made its graduates eligible to take the US Civil Service Commission’s examinations for employment with the BAI as inspectors.⁶⁰ Also, in 1908, the AVMA Committee on Intelligence and Education accepted the BAI’s rating of veterinary colleges and its 27 recommendations for operation of those colleges for admitting qualified veterinarians for organization membership.^{61,62}

After 1913, progressively fewer private schools were accredited by the AVMA, but that was not always a deciding factor in their closures. As revealed at the 1917 AVMA meeting, the Committee on Intelligence and Education recommended the San Francisco Veterinary College as one of two independent schools to be removed from the list of accredited institutions.⁶³ Nevertheless, according to Miller,⁶⁴ “the San Francisco Veterinary College...remained open another year after it lost accreditation listing (and then ‘went out of business’)...”

New Building Never Constructed

In July 1915, the *Pacific Rural Press* reported that the San Francisco Veterinary College had hired an architect to draw up plans for “a handsome new building” for the college on 10th near Stevenson.^{65,66} “It is expected that the structure will be one of the most extensive and best equipped veterinary hospitals and schools in the country.”

Plans were likely begun to comply with increasing AVMA and BAI accreditation requirements and compete with other schools in the east that were upgrading their buildings to raise and maintain their educational standards. For any number of reasons, including declining enrollment because of World War I and general financial pressures on private veterinary colleges, this facility never materialized before the school closed several years later.

School Closes in 1918

After 18 years of operation, the San Francisco Veterinary College closed in 1918, like most of the other private veterinary schools in the United States after World War I.⁶⁷ During its history, a total of 330 graduates had received DVS degrees, with those remaining in attendance transferring to other colleges.⁶⁸

Bierer remarked that, “A duty was performed by this school in supplying California and adjacent states with veterinarians.”⁶⁹ Many of those graduates made substantial contributions to the profession, particularly in California, with the last 9 still practicing as late as 1963.⁷⁰

After the school closed, Dr. Creely moved into a small office on the south side of Market Street near Gough Street “with the intention of engaging solely in pet practice.” When unable to obtain a building permit, Dr. Creely established a pet only practice in a store at 1109 Market Street. “Here he devoted most of his time to pets, although he retained a small part of his horse practice until his retirement.”⁷¹

Dr. Creely's Other Veterinary Activities

In addition to practice and teaching at his veterinary school, Dr. Creely served as City Veterinarian and journalist for many years, among other professional activities.

Public Health Veterinarian

When a major epidemic of highly contagious glanders broke out in San Francisco's horse population in spring of 1892, Dr. Creely as City Veterinarian was on the forefront of a controversial dispute. He was supposedly quoted as saying, "there is scarcely a livery stable in the city that is free of it."^{72,73} The allegation that public livery stables were hotbeds of disease "came as a thunderbolt" and sent shock waves along Golden Gate Avenue, where a number of veterinary hospitals and several public livery stables were located. Being mutually dependent on business with the stables, a number of veterinarians refuted claims of a looming epidemic as exaggerated by Dr. Creely in an article in the *San Francisco Call* on April 7.⁷⁴ They attempted to cast doubt on the whole situation as absurd, deriding it as mere ignorance attributed to Creely being "a young and comparatively inexperienced veterinary surgeon" at age 25.

Because of the extent of the controversy, Creely issued an apology for angering the community of livery owners and veterinarians a week earlier.⁷⁵ It was reported, "He is not responsible ... for the assertion that glanders was raging in the livery stables. Quite the contrary, the doctor does claim that the [public] livery stables are the last place in the world to find a case of glanders." He said he was "very sorry" for the "unintentional wrong" and panic that his comments had created. Having "done brilliant and successful work to establish this enormous practice, but were it not for the kind words and helping hands of the livery stable keepers and horsemen, he would not have succeeded as he has done."

By about 1895, Dr. Creely had been appointed City Veterinarian by the San Francisco Board of Health. In this official capacity, he became involved in efforts in the 1890s to reform the city's milk supply along with chief food and market inspector James P. Dockery.⁷⁶ As Robichaud points out,⁷⁷ "The city's new veterinary surgeon, Dr. Creely, played an especially important role in the growing efforts to police the city's cows and dairy farms. Creely also set his sights on Islais Creek, arguing that the cows there fed on 'grasses grown in water which is thick with the seepage from slaughter-houses, soap factories and tanneries,' and produced milk that was dangerously unhealthy." In that regard, along with Dockery, he participated in onsite inspection "raids" and surveillance in and around the notorious "Butchertown" slaughterhouse area on Islais Creek south of the city.^{78,79,80,81} One particular inspection on November 25, 1895, resulted in a number of arrests.

He would continue working with inspector Dockery investigating all of the dairies and ranches in the county and

taking appropriate action, such as preventive killing of the 31 severely tuberculous cows at the Almshouse dairy in April, 1896.^{82,83} (Figs. 16 and 17)

Dr. Creely was also called upon concerning cases of foul play,^{84,85,86} such as performing a necropsy on a goat that had been poisoned by strychnine (Fig. 18), testifying as a witness in a trial about a poisoned cat, or providing emergency care for 13 draying business horses that succumbed to arsenic poisoning by an "unknown ruffian." In the latter tragic situation, Dr. Creely remarked, "if there is anything I hate... it is to see a fine horse die."



Figure 16. "[Dr. Creely?] injecting tubercules in the neck of an Almshouse cow. Source: Sick cows at the Almshouse. *San Francisco Call*. 79(139):5, 1896 17 Apr. *California Digital Newspaper Collection*, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=S-FC18960417.2.53&srpos=123&c=-----189-en--20--121--txt-tx-IN-dockery+milk-----1>



Figure 17. Slaughtering the cows at the Almshouse. Dr. Creely is likely on the right in apron and veterinarians' derby hat. Source: Thirty-one sick cows are killed...Dockery and Creely now propose to make war on the dairies in the county. *San Francisco Call*. 79(140):31, 1896 Apr 18. *California Digital Newspaper Collection*, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SFC18960418.2.184&srpos=13&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-creely-----1>

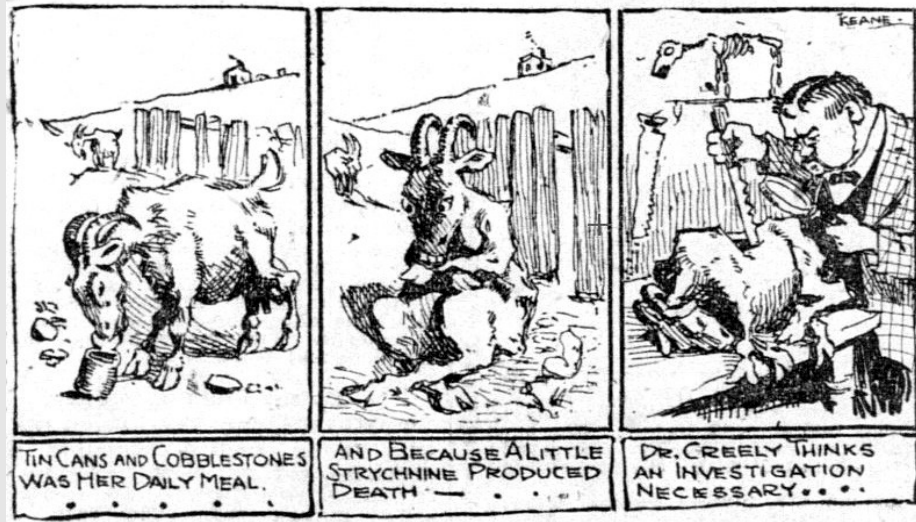


Figure 18. Dr. Creely performing a necropsy of a poisoned goat. Source: A goat's sad fate. *San Francisco Call*. 85(51):9, 1899 Jan 20. *California Digital Newspaper Collection*, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=S-FC18990120.2.80&srpos=123&e=------cn--20--121--txt-txIN-creely-----1>

During his long and productive career, Dr. Creely also served as Chief Veterinary Surgeon and Chief Quartermaster Veterinarian for the Pacific Coast for the US Government at the Presidio Military Reservation during the Spanish-American War. In that capacity, he was responsible for examining and purchasing all of the horses obtained by the army in the western states.⁸⁷ As a result, Dr. Creely discovered the first cases of glanders in 30 cavalry horses in April 1901.^{88,89}

In addition to being City Veterinarian, he was active in professional organizations holding various offices in the California State Veterinary Medical Association, including that of secretary, vice president, as well as president in 1905.⁹⁰

He was appointed by Governor James Gillette in 1907 to serve on the State Board of Veterinary Examiners and as secretary for 7 years.⁹¹ Following reappointment by Governor William D. Stephens in 1919, he was elected its president.⁹²

He was also active in horsemanship in California. One of his obituaries noted, "The skill of Dr. Creely aided in a great degree the development of the trotting horse on the late Senator [Leland] Stanford's Palo Alto Stock Farm."⁹³



Figure 19. Dr. Edward J. Creely, 1921. Source: An appreciation of our veterinarian's service. *Pacific Rural Press*. 101(1):73, 1921 Jan 1.

Earlier, Eadweard Muybridge is recognized for having photographed the running stride of one of Stanford's horses in 1872.

Journalist for the Pacific Rural Press

Beginning with the October 28th issue in 1893, Dr. Creely (Fig. 19) started writing an advice column for the Veterinary Department of the *Pacific Rural Press*, a weekly newspaper for farmers and agriculturists in California and its central valley. In the opening column, he pledged,⁹⁴

"When my advice is given I intend it shall be the best that hard study and scientific research can make it. I intend to hold nothing in secret. I will write all my prescriptions in English in preference to Latin, so it will not be necessary to run to a druggist for every simple thing which in many cases can be obtained in well-regulated stables. When I prescribe through the RURAL for an animal, it will be the best I can write. Irrespective of who benefits by it.... The answers to all questions will be given promptly and willingly, and the writer will feel that he is doing an act of charity to the poor dumb brutes who are unable to complain of feeling unfit to perform duty."

In this series of practical articles in response to questions submitted by readers, he shared his expert knowledge backed by years of successful experience as a veterinarian in answering queries. Over the years, answers regarding problems, such as heaves, lameness, acute indigestion, poisoning, wounds, warts, cowpox, mange, dehorning, feeding, lice, nasal catarrh, and much more, were addressed.

Dr. E.J. Creely regularly contributed those columns for about 28 years. When they were discontinued due to his ill health, a notice of appreciation appeared in the January 1, 1921, issue.

Family Veterinary Connections

Two of Dr. Creely's three sons, Elwin J. (d. 1935) and Andrew J., attended the San Francisco Veterinary College receiving their DVS degrees in 1914 and 1915, respectively.⁹⁵ After military service, Dr. Elwin Creely joined the BAI as a Supervising Meat Inspector and later entered private practice. Unfortunately, he met an untimely death in 1935.⁹⁶

Dr. Andrew Creely initially joined the BAI as a meat inspector in various locations for many years. After leaving government service in 1944, he assisted at the small animal practice of his uncle Dr. Thomas R. Creely for some years. In 1947, he purchased and took over the practice originally belonging to Dr. K. O. Steers on Steiner Street until retirement in 1960. Dr. Steers' practice was the first to maintain a hospital devoted exclusively to pets. He had been "a leading light of the California Veterinary College."

As Dr. Edward Creely's younger brother, Dr. Thomas Russell Creely (1882–1951),^{97,98} was born in San Francisco and received his DVS degree from the San Francisco Veterinary College in 1905. In addition to operating a busy dog and cat hospital at 3170 Sacramento Street, he was president of the California State Board of Veterinary Examiners and served for 14 years on the San Francisco Board of Fire Commissions, which included 3 terms as president.

Third brother James H. Creely, A.B. (1869-1916) became an attorney with a private law practice in Oakland. While not a veterinarian, he was listed as being on the faculty of the San Francisco Veterinary College as Professor of Jurisprudence.⁹⁹

Final Years

When Dr. Creely suffered a stroke in 1920 that left him with a slight paralysis, he sold his practice to Drs. Joseph M. Arburua and John McInnes the following year. (Figs. 20 and 21) However, he remained interested in his successors, "even going on calls with them when clients would not willingly accept the young doctors" until a succession of strokes took his life on December 18, 1929, at age 62. "This ended the career of one of the most colorful veterinarians ever to practice in this state [of California]."¹⁰⁰

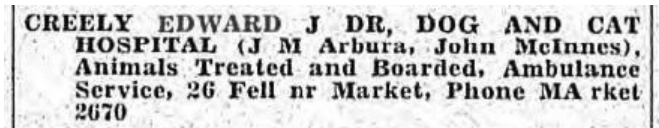


Figure 20. 1929 City Directory, p. 485. Source: Ancestry.



Figure 21. Dr. E. J. Creely. Source: Arburua. Narrative, p. 262.

Dr. Joseph Arburua remembered, "E.J. was a versatile individual with many talents, and beyond a doubt the most controversial figure in the profession in California. He was quick-witted and a master psychologist. He was a lightning diagnostician, often uncanny in his decisions—although occasionally they were made too rapidly. Many tales were told about his mental agility; some were true; some doubtless became more exaggerated with each telling."¹⁰¹

Summary

The private San Francisco Veterinary College founded by Dr. E.J. Creely was in operation for nearly 20 years from 1899 to 1918. It was created to fulfill not only the growing need for educated veterinarians in California but also the dream of a dynamic and progressive veterinarian following in the footsteps of his former professor, Dr. Alexandre Liautard. Many of those 330 graduates would contribute significantly to the health and welfare of urban working horses, and to production and companion animals as well as the public at large. Nevertheless, like other private schools across the country in that early 20th century transition period, lower enrollment,

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YEAR	EVENT	DEAN AND/OR FOUNDER
1888	California State Veterinary Medical Association founded in San Francisco	
1895	University of California San Francisco Veterinary Department founded	Thomas Bowhill, MBE, FRCVS, FRPS, first dean
1899	University of California San Francisco Veterinary Department closes	
1899	San Francisco Veterinary College founded	Edward J. Creely, DVS, dean and president
1913	University of California Veterinary Department vacant building assigned to the newly established Hooper Foundation for medical research	George H. Whipple, MD, director
1918	San Francisco Veterinary College closes	

loss of AVMA accreditation, and financial difficulties were factors in its closing around World War I.

Thirty years would elapse before the state-supported University of California, Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, next opened in 1948.

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