Why is Veterinary History Important?

Veterinarians are often unaware of their profession’s historical significance. Generally, like so many others, they may not know or fully realize the significant role that veterinary medicine has played in American history.

In particular, the profession has:

- Boosted static economics.
- Facilitated and contributed to war victories.
- Provided safe meat and dairy products.
- Helped build thriving livestock industries.
- Been instrumental in the development of human health measures.
- Advocated for animal welfare.
- With human medicine, contributed to the control of many infectious diseases.
- Promoted companion animal health care.

Why the American Veterinary Medical History Society?

The American Veterinary Medical History Society was formed by a group of interested veterinarians to recall the past and relate it in an interesting fashion to their colleagues in the present, and to collect and place in suitable archives, a record of the “remembered” past from as many sources as possible.

This group is made up of those interested in preserving books, photos, and artifacts of the past and present. Members have many diverse interests, such as collecting prints, medallions, stamps, logos, diplomas, patent medicine bottles and containers, antique instruments, postcards, and more. There are now about 13 important collections and museums covering instruments, pharmaceutical books, papers of individuals, audiotapes of interviews with outstanding veterinarians, slides, memorabilia, photographs, catalogues, diplomas, miscellaneous papers, items representing veterinary practice, research and regulatory activities in the United States.

Co-founded by Drs. J. Fred Smithcors and William E. Ryan, the Society held its first formal meeting at the American Veterinary Medical Association convention in Dallas in 1978. The AVMHS celebrated its 25th Anniversary in Denver in 2003.

How May I Become a Member?

We welcome all persons interested in veterinary medical history for membership in the American Veterinary Medical History Society, Inc.

Our membership year runs from July 1 through June 30. Annual dues are:

- $50 Individual member
- $60 Couple/family
- $20 Student
- $500 Life member
- $30 Veterinary Heritage only

Donations toward AVMHS projects are welcome.

Make checks or money orders payable to: American Veterinary Medical History Society Or, use PayPal from AVMHS Web Site “Join Us”

For members outside the USA, please add an additional $10.00 to help cover extra postage. Checks/money orders should be converted into US Dollars and issued on banks with a US branch/office to avoid an added bank charge.

Send your dues payment and attached form to:

American Veterinary Medical History Society c/o Susanne Whitaker, Secretary/Treasurer 23 Wedgewood Drive Ithaca, NY 14850-1064

Tax ID No. 47-0815143

Contact Us:

American Veterinary Medical History Society c/o Susanne Whitaker, Secretary/Treasurer 23 Wedgewood Drive Ithaca, New York 14850-1064 U.S.A.

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"History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us the tidings of antiquity." — Cicero

Dr. Cooper Curtice examining ticks on a cow dead from Texas fever. The discovery by veterinarians that arthropods were involved in the transmission of this disease was one of the "epochal accomplishments in the field of medical history." (Courtesy The Nations Business)
I want to become a member of the American Veterinary Medical History Society. My check/money order for $______________ is enclosed.

Name ________________________________________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________________________________________________________

City ______________________________________  State/Province ______________  Zip Code ________________________________

Telephone (Office) _____________________ Telephone (Home) ________________________ Email __________________________

Principal Activity _________________________________________________________________________________________________

Special Interest(s) ________________________________________________________________________________________________

What are the Objectives of the Society?

- To become aware of published and unpublished materials and artifacts pertaining to the history of veterinary medicine and health care of animals primarily in North America.
- To promote research and study on veterinary history and related topics.
- To communicate information about veterinary medical history through publication of a journal/newsletter, seminars/meetings, and other avenues.
- To serve as a resource for individuals and groups seeking information about the history of veterinary medicine.
- To develop and distribute educational materials on the history of veterinary medicine.
- To assess the role of veterinarians in society and study their impact on animal and human medicine and scientific research.
- To establish and foster rapport with other national and international veterinary history societies.

Visit the American Veterinary Medical History Society Web site at: https://avmhs.org

Membership Benefits Include:

- AVMHS annual meeting program with a presented paper via videoconferencing or in-person at American Veterinary Medical Association convention as well as at special and regional meetings.
- Veterinary Heritage, the AVMHS bulletin published twice per year in May and November.
- Sharing information, news and comments with others interested in veterinary history around the world.
- Promoting overall scholarship, research, and education related to veterinary history.
- Supporting veterinary oral history interviews and 50+ year old heritage veterinary practice awards.
- Obtaining and sharing early veterinary books, instruments, and memorabilia.
- Guided tours of veterinary museums and important historical collections.
- Affiliation with other veterinary and medical history associations.

The American Veterinary Medical History Society: The First Twenty-Five Years, a 24-page publication written by Dr. J. Fred Smithcors for the AVMHS 25th Anniversary Celebration in 2003.

Recent Notable Activities

- Smithcors Veterinary Student Essay Contest established in 1991 to encourage students at veterinary schools in the U.S., Canada & West Indies to research & write on veterinary history.
- Time-Bites are short “stories” about aspects of veterinary history posted on the Veterinary Information Network (VIN) http://www.vin.com
- Registry of Heritage Veterinary Practices recognizes practices with 50 or more years of continuous operation and service.
- Oral Histories of Veterinary Medicine program strives to record oral history interviews of senior veterinarians who have witnessed significant changes in the veterinary field.