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George Angell — Father of Humane Education

George Angell, founder of the Massachusetts SPCA in 1867, can rightfully be called the father of humane education.

A lawyer by profession, Angell made the connection between animal cruelty and human violence all of 130 years ago when he suggested that all abuse shared common roots.

In 1870 he published 200 000 copies of a new monthly newsletter called 'Our Dumb Animals'.

A year later, he abandoned his law practice and devoted himself to giving lecture tours on animals, founding many local and state humane societies along the way. In 1882 he formed childrens groups called Bands of Mercy and by the turn of the century, 30 000 Bands of Mercy stretched across North America.

Angell committed himself to finding a book to awaken sensitivity towards animals in the same way that Uncle Tom's Cabin had done with slavery. In 1890, he found the book he was looking for. With a gift of 5000 dollars, he printed 200 000 copies. The book was *Black Beauty*, written in England by Anna Sewell.



GEORGE ANGELL

Angell believed that 'adults are beyond repair' and he devoted his passion towards the education of children. He bombarded private, public and Sunday schools with his leaflets.

Before his death, he wrote: "I had always held the doctrine that a thousand times more could be done to prevent cruelty by humane education than by any other means, and the time to start is early childhood."

(This story is reprinted here with permission of The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals, England, Bulletin 55, Spring 2000).