

How and Why The HSUS Was Founded

Robert J. Chenoweth
President, 1954 – 1963
Chairman of the Board, 1963 – 1968
Chairman Emeritus, 1968 – 1976



Fred Myers
Executive Director, 1954 – 1963
Vice-President, 1963



Oliver M. Evans
Director, 1954 – 1963
President, 1963 – 1967
Director & Treasurer, 1967 – 1975



Mel L. Morse
President, 1967 – 1970
Vice-President, 1970 – 1975



Coleman Burke
Director, 1967 – Present
Chairman of the Board, 1968 – Present



John A. Hoyt
President, 1970 – Present

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) originally called the National Humane Society, was incorporated on November 22, 1954 in the state of Delaware for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Court action in December of 1956 by the American Humane Association prompted the Board of Directors to change the Society's name rather than use funds contributed for animal protection to pay for costly litigation.

The HSUS came into being because, for several years previously, a great many people throughout the United States were aware of the tremendous need for a strong humane group that would actively endorse and work towards eliminating, on a national scale, some of the more obvious cruelties and injustices imposed on animals in slaughterhouses and by uncontrolled breeding of domestic pets. They also realized the necessity for a humane organization that would act in a missionary role, to encourage and assist in the formation of humane societies in the thousands of towns and areas where none existed.

At first it was hoped this kind of leadership could be found within a "reformed" American Humane Association, and to this end a large group of AHA members, in 1954, nominated candidates for election to The AHA board in opposition to a slate named by the board itself. The majority of members at The AHA convention held in Atlanta, Georgia, October 1954, endorsed the humane goals of the insurgents and elected the three candidates on the reform slate -- Miss J.M. Perry, Raymond Naramore and Roland Smith. But the old board retaliated by firing or forcing the resignation of several staff members, including Fred Myers, Larry Andrews, Helen Jones and Marcia Glaser, and through a change in the bylaws succeeded in disenfranchising a majority of members.

Among the first Board members were Dr. Myra Babcock of Detroit, Michigan; Mr. Oliver Evans of Clayton, Missouri; Mrs. Elsa Voss of Monkton, Maryland; Mr. Delos Culver of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania; Mr. Arthur P. Redman of Seattle, Washington; Mrs. R. Alger Sawyer of Scarsdale, New York; Mr. D. Collis Wager of Utica, New York; Mr. Robert Chenoweth of Kansas City, Missouri; and Mr. Charles Herbert Appleby of New York, New York. Mr. Chenoweth was elected President of the newly formed Board. The working staff consisted of Fred Myers, Larry Andrews, Helen Jones and Marcia Glaser.

Because of discontent with The AHA practice of placing contributed funds in special endowment trusts instead of using them for direct relief of animal suffering as their donors had intended, the bylaws of the new Society specifically forbade the transfer of operating funds to a restricted endowment fund without a referendum vote of the entire HSUS membership.

Funds were very low in the beginning. Three of the principal founders had to borrow money on their life insurance policies in order to keep the fledgling society afloat. Nevertheless, the new society embarked on vigorous campaigns against the surplus breeding of cats and dogs, the brutal treatment of food animals in slaughterhouses, and the abuse of animals in medical research laboratories. The first leaflet published was entitled *They Preach Cruelty*. It attacked the cruelty that results from the constantly mounting population of unwanted dogs and cats. Also exposed and publicized were the cruel conditions under which monkeys were being shipped into the United States.

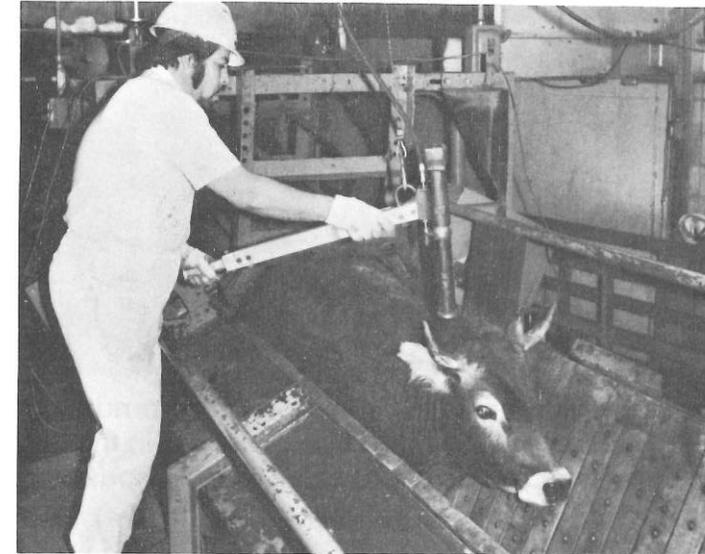
One of the cruelties exposed by The HSUS in the early days was the tragic plight of monkeys imported for use in laboratories.

— Eli Lilly & Co.



In 1956 humane slaughter became a primary issue with the introduction in Congress of the first humane slaughter bill by Congresswoman Martha Griffiths of Michigan. Soon after, the late Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced a similar bill in the Senate. The new Society supported these bills and quickly became the leader in the fight for slaughterhouse reform. The HSUS distributed leaflets on the issue at the rate of 2,000 a day.

It sponsored a study of electrical stunning which was then being used for the slaughter of hogs in Denmark. At the same time Board member Arthur Redman produced a film on hog slaughter exposing its extreme cruelty. The film was widely shown to the public and to Congressmen.



Humane stunning techniques such as the Remington stunner came into use following the passage of The Humane Slaughter Act of 1958.

— HSUS

The first issue of *The HSUS News* was published in April 1955 and had as its lead story the fight to relieve the tragic plight of laboratory animals. There was also a story on slaughterhouse reform efforts along with articles on educational activities and a list of resolutions that had been adopted as policy by the Board of Directors. The first *News* was published bimonthly in a newsletter format. Over the years the *News* has evolved into an attractive and informative magazine that is distributed quarterly. Through the years materials and publications were developed on virtually every issue and have grown to a point where a multi page order form is needed to list the more than 100 publications currently available. Additionally, special publications have been developed for teachers and children; *Close-Up Reports* on specific animal welfare issues are distributed at least four times a year to a constituency of approximately 115,000 people; *Shelter Sense* is issued bi-monthly to subscribing humane societies and animal control agencies to assist them in the day-to-day operation of their shelters; *Kind* magazine for children is published six times annually, and the educational magazine, *Humane Education*, is distributed quarterly to members of HSUS's National Association for the Advancement of Humane Education.

HSUS's Institute for the Study of Animal Problems will soon

publish a fifth regular publication entitled *International Journal for the Study Of Animal Problems*. The Journal will feature scientific articles on problems facing the humane movement and what can be done about them.

Staff Changes

On July 13, 1956 one of the principal founders of The HSUS, Larry Andrews, resigned from the staff and was elected to the Board of Directors. In April 1958 he resigned from the Board. His staff replacement marshalled support for the Society's programs, organized special committees in states and communities to work for slaughterhouse reform and a reduction in the staggering number of surplus cats and dogs. Slaughterhouse reform was especially important since interest in humane slaughter legislation had continued to increase and, by this time, seven bills were pending before Congress. The work of The HSUS during this period produced a massive letter-writing campaign to Congress and, in the fall of 1958, President Eisenhower signed the new law. It was the first major victory for the young HSUS which had led the battle for slaughterhouse reform for several years.

In 1959, to win the cooperation of church groups, Helen Jones (one of the founders of the Society) resigned to head the National Catholic Society for Animal Welfare. The National Catholic Society was started with the moral and financial support of The HSUS in the hope of gaining strong support for the cause from the church.

The Society created a Technical Services Department to provide technical assistance and advice on animal welfare problems to local humane societies and governmental agencies. In July of 1960, the Livestock Department and Field Service Office was opened in Denver to serve the Rocky Mountain area. The Society also began to expand its scope of activity and, at the 1960 Annual Conference, a resolution was adopted to work toward the end of the slaughter of fur seals. A nationwide campaign for state humane slaughter laws was intensified and the new Livestock Department began extensive investigations into the transportation of livestock.