

Exhibit Title #3

The Pull of Horses on National and Local Histories and Identities

Exhibit Abstract

This exhibit would present the original documentary video, "The Pull of Horses in Urban American Performance, 1860-1920," running on a loop alongside exhibits of archival printed materials, manuscripts, photographs, and objects that would elaborate and relate the video's contents to local Iowa histories. A digital arts and humanities project, The Pull of Horses synthesizes historical images, early cinema reality footage, and clips of present-day reiterations of 19th-century practices to animate full-scale historical human-equine interactions for scholarly and wider public audiences. The exhibit would illuminate how horses shaped gender and other human identities as well as landscapes from New York City to Iowa City and beyond during a pivotal era of industrial transformation when women won the vote and class and racial divides increased.

Topic Background

The Pull of Horses is a digital arts and humanities project that synthesizes archival and live performance sources into a 60-minute immersive video animating historical human-equine interactions for intimate full-scale engagements with scholarly and wider public audiences. The video aims to show audiences today how horses shaped gender and other human identities and bodies in and beyond the emerging U.S. cultural capital, New York City, during pivotal decades of industrial transformation, 1860-1920. Since May 2016, the proposed Curator has been collaborating on the project with proposed Co-Curator Mark Anderson, Digital Collections Librarian in the UI Libraries Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio, and, since the summer of 2017, with Theatre Arts major and exceptional sound and video designer, Wade Hampton, who graduated in August 2018. Proposer recently received an AHI Standard Grant to support continuing work with Hampton from January to July 2019 to build the remaining three of five sections of the video; test the immersive, large-scale display with all the requisite equipment; and complete final editing after that test. The test screening is scheduled for the weekend of May 16-19, 2019, in Thayer Theatre of the Theatre Building. Proposed exhibit partners and any other interested Library staff would be welcome to attend the invited audience showing on Friday, May 17, at 7:00 p.m. as part of the testing process.

Because mechanization and the internal combustion engine have so thoroughly replaced horses as prime movers, and the vast infrastructure that once supported a huge equine population has now almost entirely disappeared from the cityscape, few people today are aware that circa 1900, at the zenith of horse power, 130,000 equines dwelled amid 1.85 million people on the island of Manhattan. Given that horses at this time weighed on average ten times more than the average human, they increased by seventy percent the amount of moving body mass in the city. These animals, along with the vast quantities of food, water, stabling, waste, and equipment that had to be produced and managed for their use, were a ubiquitous and unavoidable living, breathing co-presence in people's lives on a daily basis. That density of cross-species traffic in a wide variety of work and leisure pursuits allows for a particularly illuminating exploration, prompted by the burgeoning field of animal studies, of the ways nonhuman animals have fundamentally informed humans' senses of themselves through time. Arguably, horses are the most influential animal in this regard because their strength and tractability so massively extended human physical capacities in formative but now buried ways as they hauled goods

and services, turned giant winches to build skyscrapers, empowered mounted officials, raced at high speeds, and showed off industrial wealth and civilization pulling fancy carriages.

Equine management employed and defined people across races and ethnicities as well as genders, not only through social status and income, but also through bodily awareness and conditioning. Close horse-human contact often proved unavoidably sensual, sweaty, grimy, and risky. The effect of equine contact with human female bodies, in particular, aroused concern, as masses of white upper- and middle-class women took up riding in highly visible venues around the city. Horses triangulated relations between the genders who rode and courted on horseback or in carriages, and between the riders and the different classes, races, and ethnicities of people who tended the animals. Selectively bred to a host of specialized tasks, horses offered the most high-profile demonstration of corporeal malleability toward species ideals amid social Darwinist and rising eugenicist ideologies. As the two species worked intensively together, various breeds of horses compounded humans' diverse senses of their own bodies and experience of corporeal power and vulnerability. Because horses as herd and prey animals evolved to be supremely skilled at bodily sensitivities to others' physical presence, humans had to cultivate more of this awareness in themselves in order to co-exist with and manage these then necessary creatures. Certain humans were considered better suited to this crucial task than others, which became a potent factor in social categorization. Through all these dynamics, horses pulled on identities and power structures as well as winches, arms, and wagons. With their massive muscle and often dazzling, if inherently unpredictable, athleticism, these animals indelibly transformed urban humanity along with the cityscape. As electric streetcars and automobiles began supplanting horses in this period, debates about the relative merits of old versus new power sources pushed horses' transforming effects on humanity into further relief.

The video demonstrates how the identity-shaping force of human-equine interactions became especially visible and influential through public performance in city streets, building sites, and parks and, most spectacularly, in show arenas and theatres. The Golden Age of Broadway coincided with the Golden Age of the Horse in the city, and live equines frequently appeared on theatrical as well as various social and industrial stages where spectators gathered. Performance concentrated attention on humans' demonstrable expertise with horses and the physiques of both species, inviting judgment and emulation, which could variously foster and subvert dominant conventions. After an introductory overview and a mapping section to illuminate the vast infrastructure of horse-related businesses that once thickly dotted the cityscape, the video proceeds with four main sections organized around specific human-equine interactions in major public performance venues: the Work Horse Parade, Central Park, the National Horse Show at Madison Square Garden, and the Manhattan Opera House.

Along with structuring the analysis and content of the video, performance also crucially informs the primary modes of viewer engagement necessary to achieve the project's aims. We envision viewings of the video as collectively experienced events in generally lit gallery spaces, such as the Library Gallery, involving fully embodied, kinesthetic engagements with the material. The key concept is to put viewers in close relation to life-sized historical images on a 9' x 16' screen set at ground level with high quality projections and to flesh out the experience of living and working with horses in the city through sound and voiceover narration. Some of the images are engravings and photographs, sometimes viewed as still images and sometimes with a dynamic, moving effect achieved by panning and zooming to direct focus and give the viewer the experience of attending the event. Other sequences involve motion picture film clips, including early silent cinema historical reality footage of life in New York City c. 1900 as well as

clips of contemporary horses working. Projecting these images and clips life-sized with the screen on the ground enables viewers to walk up and gain the sense of being on the same footing with the animals where they can feel their presence and power in terms of scale, proximity, and motion. Some sequences put the viewer directly behind carriage horses in the driver position or over the horse's back as though riding. The soundtrack is edited in surround sound to immerse the viewers in a soundscape rigorously researched for historical accuracy and multi-layered to convey the density of urban noise with horse traffic. We envision display stands with worn leather harness and saddles positioned near the screen to give audiences a tactile feel of the equipment used in interactions with these once indispensable creatures.

The Library Gallery offers the opportunity to expand the project's aims and appeal by surrounding the video and stands of horse equipment with archival materials in the display cases to elaborate the video's contents and relate them to local collections and histories. As part of the larger framing of the exhibit as well as a motif running through it, we would want to recognize that as prime movers for human societies, horses were used to displace and oppress certain groups of people while empowering and building civilizations for other groups. We would want to reference the larger history of these dynamics through which horses factored in European settlement and Indian removal from North American lands. The video highlights later echoes of these dynamics in the building of Central Park for which some 1,600 immigrant laborers and the African American community of Seneca Village were displaced under eminent domain so horse-powered equipment could raze their homes and sculpt the landscape into the gentrified bucolic vision of designers Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. The video also points to the racial and class stratification of the vast horse industry and the contributions of ethnically and racially diverse laborers on whom the industry depended. In planning the exhibit, we would want to ensure that the use of horses for physical and social mobility of people from diverse demographic groups is kept visible.

Proposer owns a collection of original engravings (acquired via ebay) from late 19th and early 20th century periodicals, such as Harper's Bazaar, Leslie's Illustrated Magazine, and Appleton's Journal, many of which were digitized for the video. A few of these originals could be displayed, along with originals and reproductions of some of the many still photographs used in the video, to give viewers a deeper sense of the era and the actual artifacts people at the time consumed. The engravings are incredibly rich and detailed, especially the larger centerfolds, which would display well in the cases. These depict, for example, scenes from Central Park carriage parades as well as riding stables and academies showing workers and clientele managing various horse breeds. A Library copy of a whole magazine from which one of these engravings comes would be beneficial to show alongside it. These periodicals circulated nationally, which is how trends set in New York City spread westward across the country, including to Iowa. We would also use the cases to display more particular vignettes of local Iowa histories with horses, such as in transportation and construction in Iowa City and in nearby farming and mining communities. Thus, the exhibit would include materials from the Iowa State Historical Society as well University Library collections. Artifacts will show that influence flowed from the Midwest eastward as well as vice-versa because leading work-horse breeding stock, notably of Percherons and Belgians, were imported to Iowa farms and then their progeny were shipped to coastal cities for sale and use.

A major theme of the video that would be extended in the exhibit relates to women and horses. Whereas horseback riding had been chiefly the prerogative of men (and a few aristocratic women) for millennia, it was not until the decades following the Civil War that large numbers of middle- as well as

upper-class white women took up the sport as part of a burgeoning physical culture movement. Horses played a significant role in white women's social and political empowerment and movement in the public sphere; however, for equestriennes to maintain respectability, social propriety dictated that they ride sidesaddle until about 1915. The riding style of the leading icon of the Woman Suffrage campaign thwarted these dictates and compounded her power. Inez Milholland, aka the Iron Jawed Angel on Horseback, sat resolutely astride, as opposed to aside, her white charger. The exhibit would use this image to tie into the 2020 centennial of the 19th Amendment, especially during Women's History Month in the Spring, and would frame it in terms of the fraught racial and class as well as gender politics of the suffrage movement. The exhibit would also tie the theme of women's horsemanship into local histories of riding as part of Women's Athletics at the University of Iowa, of immigrant women who worked with horses on Iowa farms, and of venturesome Iowa women who headed West on horseback and in horse-drawn wagons. Because animals can forge connections between humans of diverse interests and backgrounds, The Pull of Horses exhibit could pull in various audiences from across campus and the wider community.

Learning Objectives

- Illuminate the historical impact of horses on the development of place and the built environment through their role as prime movers;
- Illuminate human-horse relationships and their impact on social and cultural identities;
- Illuminate the extent to which Iowa City and environs relied on horsepower and the particularities of local human-equine relationships;
- Extend horse-centered social and cultural history beyond traditional academic print media (books and articles) into the new media format of digital video with the added dimensionality of artifactual display designed for public as well as scholarly engagement in a gallery space.
- Demonstrate innovative tools and a methodology for revivifying historical interspecies relationships for scholars across disciplines and the wider public to examine.

Proposed Partners

- Iowa Women's Archives. Proposer and Anderson met with Kären Mason, Janet Weaver, and Anna Tunnicliff to discuss potential exhibit and learn about their relevant holdings; they have offered a verbal agreement to be partners.
- Iowa State Historical Society. Proposer has already spent several hours with Mary Bennett and her staff to begin investigating the trove of potential materials for the proposed exhibit with the understanding that they could be used per official procedures.
- Obermann Center. Teresa Mangum has given invaluable support over the past two years to the development of the digital video at the center of the exhibit. She has offered co-sponsoring support for the proposed exhibit via publicity and provisional initial offer of \$300 toward invited speaker honorarium (she has not yet received her 2019-20 budget; more funds might be available).
- 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage Committee. A campus-wide committee headed by Dean Sarah Gardial of the School of Business has discussed the proposed exhibit and offered sponsoring support. The committee does not have their own independent funding, but they can help with publicity both locally and through their Des Moines connections. They would also be happy for us to include the committee on posters etc. as a sponsor.

- African American Museum of Iowa is currently featuring the exhibit “Driven by Hope” which explores the history of African American migration to Iowa from the end of the Civil War to the Great Depression. Proposer plans to see that exhibit and explore the role of horses in that migration. AAMI might be a potential partner.
- Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio - where proposed co-curator Mark Anderson is Digital Collections Librarian. Proposer has been developing the video in partnership with Anderson and the Studio for two years. Anderson would be participating extensively in the planning and creation of the exhibit.
- Departments of Theatre Arts and American Studies. Both of which are in transition to new DEOs beginning in July. Proposer is confident that they will be supportive, but she is waiting until they are in place with knowledge of their budgets before approaching them for formal support, including some potential funds.

Initial Wish List of Exhibit Items - External

Iowa State Historical Society

The World’ Greatest Importing Establishment, Main Barns of the Holbert Horse Importing Co. Guglen Litho, framed, color. Approx. 30 x 24”

PHOTOGRAPHS

- Various Iowa City Parade photos (including Ringling Bros. carriage drawn by zebras, World War I troops, women sidesaddle, Shaffer Livery wagon, etc.)
- Farms and Farming-special types-horses
- photo of newly arrived horses from Europe
- Photo of boys on Meskwawki ponies c. 1905, reprinted in Mary Bennett’s book An Iowa Album
- Iowa farm horse photos in Leslie A. Loveless, A Bountiful Harvest, including girl on mule, 4 children posed with grey farm horse, boy carrying water on horseback, boy pumping water for horses)
- photo in sleeve 307 SHSI #3106 broodmares in pasture, 957 team mates in orchard on their day off
- S.F. Van barn with horses
 - Iowa Central Stock Farm, stallion Black Oak standing in the grass
 - Frank P. Shekelton and Sons importers of Percherons and Belgium Horses
 - Fred C. Krueger Farm, “father” with horse
- Kent Iowa City Street Scenes
 - -Iowa Avenue and Fountain
- Farms and Farming Equipment and Machinery Horse Powered
 - -Horse-powered elevator device, Juhl Collection
- Binder pulled by 4 horses
- Business and Industry
 - Portable sawmill in winter
- Horses and Households Construction

- Horses moving house, Merle Davis Collection
- Business and Industry Product Production
 - Large group of men holding axes, moving wood with horses
 - 4 horse-drawn delivery wagons lined up in front of single-story shed
- Business and Industry Product Distribution
- Horse sale, corner of Locust and Benton Streets, Blairstown, Iowa, c. 1900
- Business and Industry Service
 - C.R.Pollock Livery and Feed
 - Studio portrait of young boy posed with image of horse, holding rein from horse's mouth
- Iowa City Fires and Fire Department
 - photographic postcard showing horse wagon of the Alert Hose Company
 - photo of horse drawn ladder wagon
- Transportation Horseback
 - woman posed outdoors seated sidesaddle on a horse
- Entertainment and amusement Circus with side show
 - Circus parade, Des Moines, 1922, 3 Native Americans on horseback
- Medicine- Veterinarian
 - a travelling salesman (on horse-drawn wagon) selling Bickman's Gall
- Hubinger Collection Parades
 - D.A.R. Float in front of Kilborne House, Keokuk Ave. tinted photo, African American Coachman
 - 7 views of floats and decorated carriages with Black livery men, Keokuk Parade, c. 1898-99
- Transportation-Wagons and Buggies
 - Sigourney, Iowa, carriage decorated with banners and Sigourney Review advertisements, c. 1900. African American driver
- President Theodore Roosevelt greeting Keokuk, Iowa, from a carriage, 1903

ARCHIVAL BOX

#SF 290 .16s Iowa Dept. of Agriculture, Stallion Registration division. Des Moines, IA.
registry of horse genealogy similar to that of humans?

African American Museum of Iowa

Photographs and documents of African Americans and horses in Iowa (Some might currently be on display until August in the exhibit "Driven by Hope," which explores the history of African American migration to Iowa from the end of the Civil War to the Great Depression. Proposer still needs to visit and explore.)

Library of Congress

Women's Suffrage Parade Photographs, including of Inez Milholland famously astride her white horse as the Iron Jawed Angel on Horseback.

- <https://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000008/>

- <https://www.loc.gov/item/97510669/>
- <https://www.loc.gov/item/2013648101/>
- <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014691486/>
- <https://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000340/>
- <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002712188/>

Curator's Personal Collection

- Original centerfold engravings of New York City horseback riding and carriage driving from Harper's Bazar, Leslie's Illustrated Magazine, and Appleton's Journal.
- Leather horse equipment for display stands, including bridles, saddle, and traditionally made Amish draft horse harness.

Initial Wish List of Exhibit Items – Internal

Iowa Women's Archives

University of Iowa Department of Physical Education for Women Records, 1900-2006 - IWA0106
Horseback Riding, 1941-1959

Box 58 Administrative Records

Box 92 Photographs

- Papers of Women who farmed, e.g., Gwendolyn Johnson Hein
- Letters of women who went West, e.g., in the Marie Rumble papers, which date from 1890 to 2002, including materials written by Rumble herself as well as recollections written by Rumble's youngest sister, Pearl Rumble Mirich.
- Book by Mirich, Homestead on the Range: A Tenderfoot Girl in Wyoming.
- Rural Women, e.g., German immigrant farmer Magdalena Tylee, large mounted photograph of her driving her two draft horses on Iowa farm
- Diary of Iowa Byington Reed, 1870s-1930s

Frederick W. Kent Collection of Photographs, 1866-2000 - RG30.0001.001 University Archives

- Men and Horse building The Hall of Liberal Arts [Schaeffer Hall], 1901-1902
- Horse and Workmen Moving a Building on Campus, 1890s
- Horse barn and Sheep Shed on Pentacrest with Old Capitol in background, The University of Iowa, 1905 [site of future Physics Building]
- Women in Greek Costumes posed with horse in front of mock temple in City Park, 1915
- Horse and Carriage on Clinton Street in front of Congregational Church

Iowa Authors Collection

- Phil Stong, Horses and Americans, with a frontispiece in color and 103 illustrations from old prints and photographs. Frederick A. Stokes, 1939.

Special Collections

- Harper's Bazaar, v.2 no. 27 (3 July 1869), display open to p. 429 W.S.L. Jewett illustration, Ladies' Riding School

Interlibrary Loan

- Elizabeth Karr, *The American Horsewoman* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1884) first edition print copy

Confirmed Sources of funding

- Marra Collegiate Fellow Fund - up to \$2000
- Obermann Center - \$300 to be used for speaker honorarium (amount tentative until 2019-20 budget is allocated, could be more).

Potential Sources of Funding

- potential funding from Departments of Theatre Arts and American Studies
- 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in 2019-2020 (19th Amendment was passed by Congress in June 1919, and ratified in August 1920) – A campus-wide committee headed by Business Dean Sarah Gardial is coordinating various events to mark the centennial, and they have offered to include this exhibit because of the symbolic and practical role of horses and riding in suffrage parades.
- 100 years ago (1917-1926) Horse-drawn public transportation disappeared from major U.S. cities such as New York, but it continued into the mid-twentieth century in parts of Iowa.

Events

- Tours offered throughout exhibit by curator
- at least one public lecture (speaker TBA)
- panel discussion with local horse people

Potential Curricular Projects or Initiatives

- Proposer would be interested in coordinating with public school teachers for a National History Day 2020 event around the exhibit.
- Proposer will be teaching a graduate seminar on Performance Studies/American Studies in Spring 2020 and will use the exhibit to explore aspects of performance as historical research and embodied engagements with archival materials.
- The exhibit would also be studied by the Performance Studies Working Group of the Obermann Center. Proposer is a co-director of that Group.