Between 1820 and 1870, middle-class Americans became convinced of the role nonhuman animals could play in socializing children. Companion animals in and around the household were the medium for training children into self-consciousness about, and abhorrence of, causing pain to other creatures including, ultimately, other people. In an age where the formation of character was perceived as an act of conscious choice and self-control, middle-class Americans understood cruelty to animals as a problem both of individual or familial deficiency and of good and evil. Training children to be self-conscious about kindness became an important task of parenting. Domestic advisors also argued that learning kindness was critical for boys who were developmentally prone to cruelty and whose youthful cruelty had implications both for the future of family life and for the body politic. The practice of pet keeping, where children became stewards of companion animals who were then able to teach young humans such virtues as gratitude and fidelity, became a socially meaningful act.
We recommend

**Considering Companion Animals**
Dawna Komorosky et al., Soc Animals

**The Relationship between Animal Cruelty, Delinquency, and Attitudes toward the Treatment of Animals**
Bill C. Henry, Soc Animals

**Cremation Services upon the Death of a Companion Animal: Views of Service Providers and Service Users**
Anna Chur-Hansen, Soc Animals

**Treasuring, Trashing or Terrorizing: Adult Outcomes of Childhood Socialization about Companion Animals**
Carol D. Raupp, Soc Animals

**An Investigation into the Association between the Witnessing of Animal Abuse and Adolescents' Behavior toward Animals**
Kelly L. Thompson et al., Soc Animals

**From Animal Abuse to Interhuman Violence? A Critical Review of the Progression Thesis**
Piers Beirne, Soc Animals

**American Childhood: Risks and Realities**
Joseph Greensher et al., J Am Med

**Inspectorship under Cruelty to Animals Act**
P. Chalmers Mitchell, The BMJ

**In Memoriam: Joseph Michael Foley, MD (1916-2012)**
Douglas J. Lanska et al., JAMA Neurol

**Swan M. Burnett, MD, PhD The Forgotten Father of Little Lord Fauntleroy**
Daniel M. Albert et al., JAMA Ophthalmol

Most cited this month

**The "Disgusting" Spider: The Role of Disease and Illness in the Perpetuation of Fear of Spiders**

Author: Graham C. L. Davey

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Anthropomorphism and Anthropomorphic Selection—Beyond the "Cute Response"

Author: James A. Serpell

More Than a Furry Companion: The Ripple Effect of Companion Animals on Neighborhood Interactions and Sense of Community

Authors: Lisa J. Wood; Billie Giles-Corti; Max K. Bulsara and Darcy A. Bosch

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