

## Gems in the John A. Seaverns Equine Collection

BY ALYSSA FREDEN

*There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.* —Winston Churchill

**O**n this, Winston Churchill and John A. Seaverns could probably agree. Seaverns omnivorously collected thousands of volumes of books, all dedicated to the horse, creating a preeminent collection that he bequeathed to the Webster Family Library at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University.

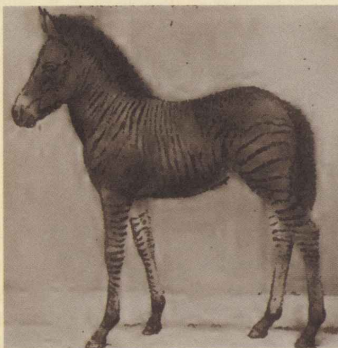
This stunning collection is now being cataloged and digitized. Through a recent agreement between the Boston Library Consortium and the Open Content Alliance (OCA), the out-of-copyright portion of the collection is being scanned and made available on the web for all to read. The cataloging and digitization project will be ongoing over the next year.

The most intriguing aspect of the collection is its depth and scope. Discovered within the collection are many gems, some of which have been scanned. Following are some examples from just the small part of the collection that is already in digital form.

Have you heard of a Zorse or a Zebrula? Perhaps a Hebra? No? Cossar Ewart, a Professor of Natural History at Edinburgh, conducted experiments cross breeding horses and zebras that were recorded in “The Pencyuik Experiments,” by none other than Ewart himself! “I have bred nine zebra hybrids by crossing mares of various sizes (from 11 to 15 hands) and breeds to my zebra stallion “Matopo,” and have in my possession three hybrids out of zebra mares, one having his for his sire a donkey, the other

two were sired by ponies. The hybrids are especially interesting to me because of the curious blending of characters, derived apparently partly from their remote ancestors, and because they shed new light on many questions of general interest ...”

This brings us to the



question: can you judge a book by its cover? This cover gives us a good idea of what might be in this volume!

Another popular topic in the late 1800's and early 1900's was riding for women or ladies and how this differed from men. Found in the introduction to “How Women Should Ride” by C. De Hurst, “No space has been wasted on unnecessary technicalities which the woman is not likely to either understand or care to digest, but everything has been written with a view of aiding her in obtaining a sound, practical knowledge of the horse, under saddle and in harness.”

While such statements may shock today's girls into a tizzy of feministic turmoil, during the time in which the book was written, it was the common thought of the general public. This book, despite the chauvinistic tone, has some illustrations that still hold true to today's standards of riding.

Have you enjoyed our journey through some of our Equine books? If you have and want more information, please go to <http://www.archive.org> and search for key word “Seaverns” to find your own gems. You can download the books or just read through them online. We are adding about forty books every two weeks and estimate that there will be about two thousand volumes. Check back often!