

For the Love of Animals

New book explores the rise of animal advocacy and shows just how far we've come.

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With all the animal charities, animal rights groups, and humane societies operating today, it's hard to believe there ever was a time in which animal welfare was not a mainstream issue.

But there was. The first animal protection law only came into existence in 1822, two years before the founding of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Now, a new book by Kathryn Shevelow explores the rise of animal advocacy and the unlikely characters involved in the struggle. "FOR THE LOVE OF ANIMALS: The Rise of the Animal Protection Movement" sketches the evolution of an unpopular issue into behavior-changing legislation.

Shevelow begins her story in 1667 London – the world's most populous city – and although indoor pets were not unusual at the time, animal neglect was far more common. With "sports" like bullbaiting, cockfighting, and foxhunting still in full swing, animals tended to be viewed as mere beasts, being expendable, disposable, and easily replaceable.

Although such names as Sir William Pulteney, "Humanity" Dick Martin, and Thomas Erskine may sound unfamiliar, these men played large parts in revolutionizing the way people viewed animals, and Shevelow gives them other notable figures their full dues.

Her book demonstrates just how humanity has progressed in its treatment of animals, and although we still have far to go, one can take hope from how far we have come.

"FOR THE LOVE OF ANIMALS: The Rise of the Animal Protection Movement," by Kathryn Shevelow, goes on sale June 24.