

Granite Fountain.
The National Humane Alliance of New York has presented to the Humane Society of Mobile a granite fountain costing \$1,000, for the benefit of animals, horses and dogs.

Mobile offered fountain 1907-07-04

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derbyct

Tue, Jan 14, 2020

MOBILE AND VICINITY

HANDSOME FOUNTAIN TO BE ERECTED.

Body of John Virgie Found Floating in River—Will of the Late James H. Masson Will Be Contested by the Son, Who Was Practically Disinherited.

Special to The Times-Democrat.

Mobile, Sept. 23.—Louis M. Seaver, secretary of the National Humane Alliance of New York city, has arrived in Mobile to select a site for a handsome fountain and water trough that has been presented to the city by the society through Capt. John Craft, president of the local branch of the organization. The fountains are made of polished Maine granite, of a very unique and pretty design, the bowl or water trough being seventy-two inches in diameter, and are derived from a fund left for the purpose by the late Herman Lee Ensign, a wealthy New Yorker.

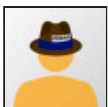
The money is derived from rentals upon property situated in New York, and since available forty-one of these fountains, which cost \$1000 each, have been erected in various cities throughout the United States, five being in Southern cities. Mr. Seaver states that fifteen fountains are to be ready for delivery Oct. 1, including the one to be erected in this city, which will make a total outlay in the United States of \$56,000. The society pays the freight from the quarry to the point where the fountain is to be located.

In company with Capt. Craft Secretary Seaver visited several sites in the city, but selected the location at the west end of Duncan Park, at the intersection of Government street. It is expected that the fountain will arrive here early in October.

On invitation from the president of the New Orleans Humane Society Secretary Seaver left here this afternoon for that city, application having been made for one of these fountains to be erected there.

Mobile to get fountain 1907-09-24

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Wed, Nov 13, 2019

An attractive fountain and watering trough, presented the city of Mobile by the National Humane Alliance of New York, to be erected at the intersection of Duncan Place and Government street has been received. Engineer Wright Smith, who has been charged by Mayor Lyons with placing the fountain in position, is to begin erection within the next few days.

Mobile fountain received - 1907-12-05

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Mon, Nov 18, 2019

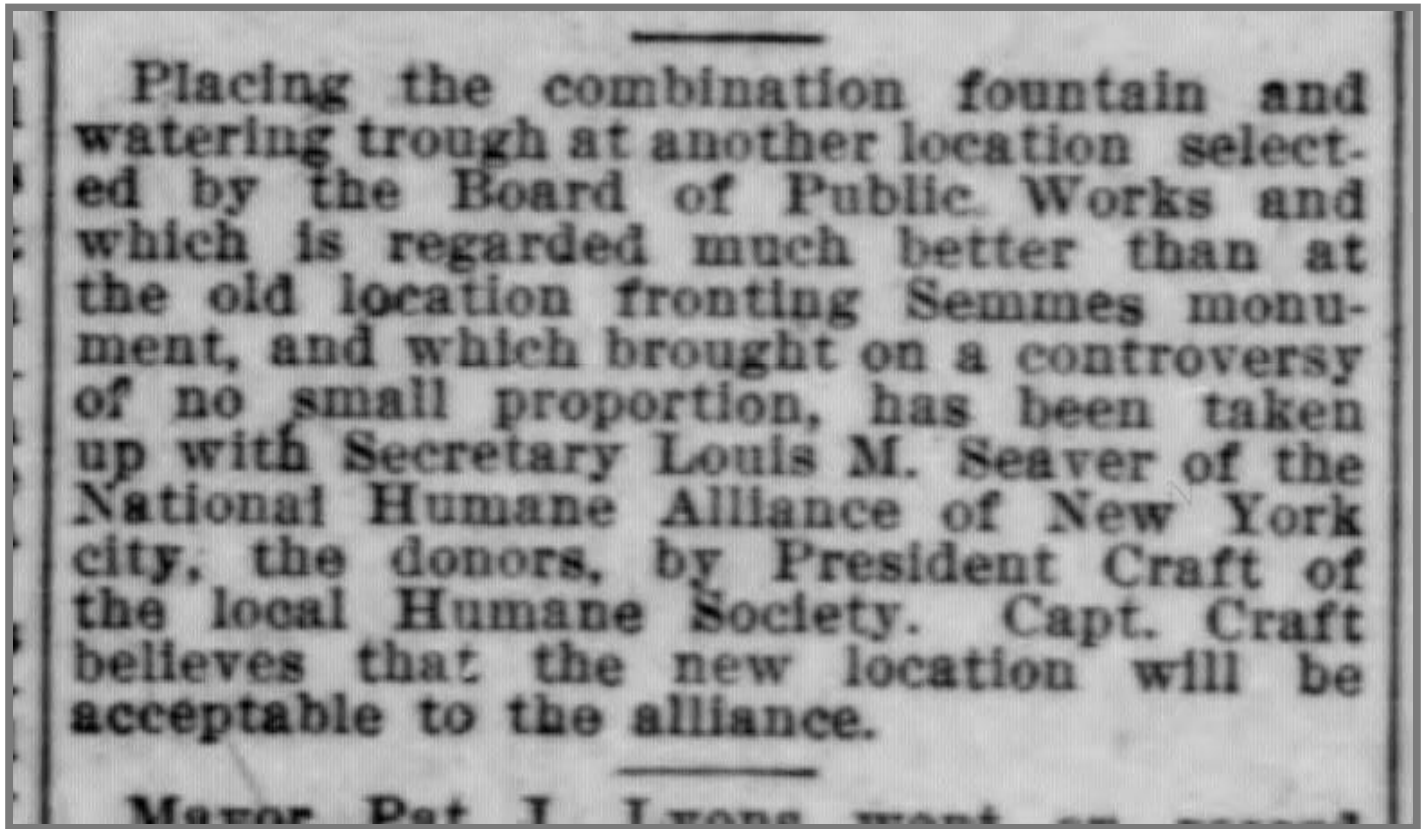
Under the direction of Chief Engineer Wright Smith of the Board of Public Works, a corps of men began to-day the erection of the handsome combination fountain and watering trough at the intersection of Government street and Duncan Place. The fountain is a gift to the city of Mobile by the National Humane Alliance of New York city, conditional that it be erected upon a location selected by Louis M. Sever, secretary of the alliance. A few weeks ago the Board of Public Works opposed the location and recommended another. This brought forth a letter from Secretary Sever to the effect that the fountain must be erected at the spot selected by him and approved by the council of Mobile or returned to the alliance. The board rescinded its action and the order given to install the very handsome ornament at the spot previously selected.

National Humane Alliance insists on location of fountain in Mobile. W. Smith begins work.

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nolahunter
Sun, Oct 27, 2019



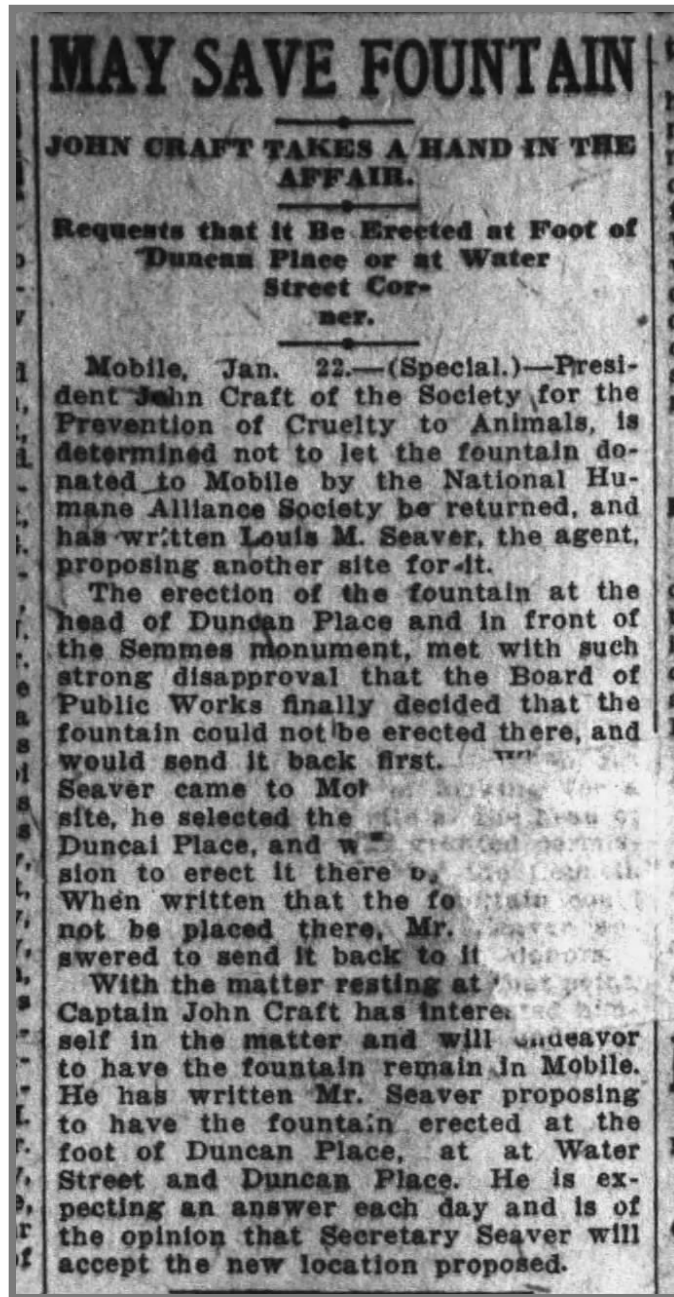
Mobile looks for different location 1908-01-22

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Mon, Nov 18, 2019



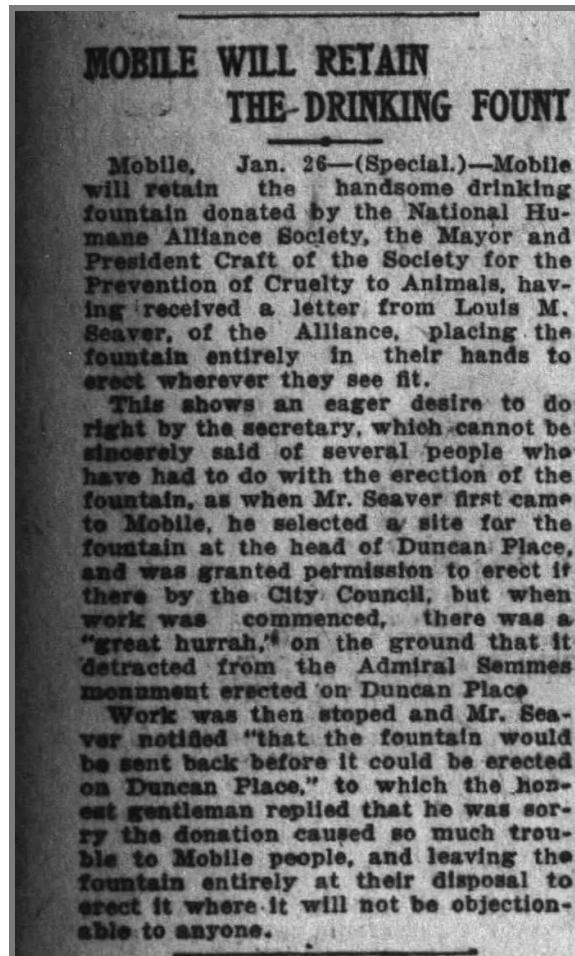
Mobile to save fountain 1908-01-23

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Tue, Jan 14, 2020



Mobile to retain fountain - 1908-01-27

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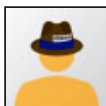
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It has been finally decided that the combination watering trough and fountain presented to Mobile by the National Humane Alliance and the subject of much comment recently because of efforts to erect it in front of the Semmes Monument, will now be erected at the intersection of Water street and Duncan place. Mayor Lyons gave orders to Chief Engineer Smith to-day to place the fountain there.

Mobile sets location 1908-01-26

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Mon, Nov 18, 2019

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At the meeting it was also decided that
the combination fountain and watering
trough presented Mobile by the National
Humane Alliance shall be erected at the
intersection of Water street and Duncan
place, thus bringing to a close a long
drawn out controversy.

Mobile decides location 1908-01-31

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Mon, Nov 18, 2019

Ask McGehee

By **Tom McGehee** - November 23, 2015

Although converted to a recirculating fountain in 1967, this Downtown fixture was originally designed to be a trough, providing water to passing humans, horses and dogs. Six decades earlier, it had been installed on Water Street, just east of the Duncan Place median of lower Government Street.

This trough, costing \$1, 000, was not unique to Mobile. Its design and creation was part of an effort by the National Humane Alliance of New York, an organization founded in 1897 by Herman Lee Ensign, a man who had made his fortune patenting a printing device. Ensign's alliance sought to instill "humanitarian ideas among the people — especially the young — ideas about humanity both to animals and each other."

After Ensign's untimely death at age 48 in 1899, the alliance began offering these watering troughs to cities around the country, as well as Mexico City and San Juan. Between 1906 and 1912, 125 communities were given one of the fountain-like structures made of polished granite quarried in Maine. The recipients had to agree to place the 5-ton troughs "20 feet away from streetcar tracks and telephone poles and (have it) continuously supplied with water."

While there were some subtle differences, each trough had three lion heads spouting water into the upper basin. Humans could capture a drink from the spout while the height of the basin allowed dray horses to quench their thirst without having to be unhitched from their wagons. And man's best friend was not forgotten: Four arched openings at the base served as water bowls for dogs.

It's unclear exactly when Mobile's example was removed from Water Street, but with the surge of automobile traffic in the 1920s, it surely could not remain in the middle of the roadway. At some point, it was placed within the courtyard of City Hall (now the History Museum of Mobile). Then, in 1966, it was discovered adorning the grounds of the city incinerator on Owens Street and was brought to the attention of Mayor Joseph Langan.

The following year, thanks to a \$1, 600 gift from Helen Meaher (Mrs. Augustine Meaher Sr.), the trough was brought to its current location. The lion heads were either damaged or missing, so they were replaced with handsome and appropriate horse head spouts, along with a plaque noting the assistance of the Meaher family.

After five decades at its present location, the granite basin is now empty except for leaves and faded Mardi Gras beads. Perhaps water will flow once more from those horse heads after changes take place at the nearby Civic Center and the area is revitalized. This monument to the humane treatment of animals deserves better.

My thanks to Mary Lou Meaher for her assistance.

Text by Tom McGehee
