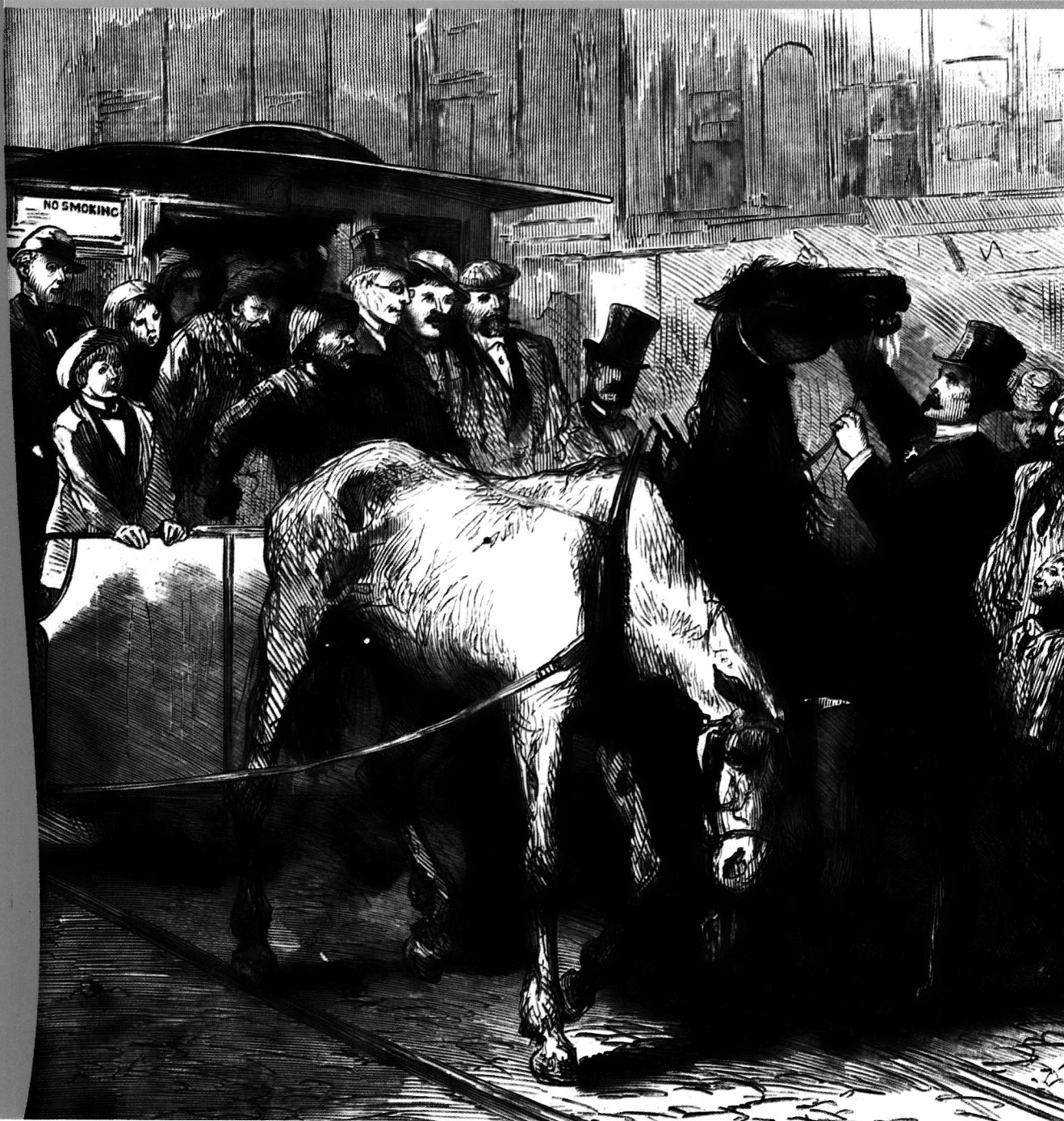


The Great Epizootic

by Barney Campbell



- 1 *Epizootic*? Now, that's a funny word. However, it wasn't funny at all in 1872.
- 2 In that year there was a sickness called "the great epizootic." It swept through Canada. Then it moved through the eastern United States. This "flu bug" didn't make people sick. Instead it killed horses.
- 3 Thousands of horses died. More than two hundred died each day in New York City. In Philadelphia, 2,250 horses died in three weeks. Montreal and Toronto, two cities in Canada, were hit hard by the great epizootic too.
- 4 There weren't any cars or buses in those days. Instead, horses pulled wagons and carriages. They carried people to work and to school. They carried goods from factories and shops.
- 5 However, in 1872 most horses were sick. So men and boys were put to work. They pulled wagons and trolley cars through the streets.
- 6 In that year Boston had a big fire. Boston's horses were sick. They couldn't bring the fire wagons to the fire. As a result much of Boston burned to the ground.
- 7 Then the spring of 1873 came. The great epizootic ended. It was a good thing it did. If it hadn't ended, horses in the rest of Canada and the United States would have died too. If they had died, many things would be different. Western films and radio and TV shows wouldn't be the same. What would the Lone Ranger be without his horse Silver?
- 8 Think of what life would be like if all the cars and buses in your town stopped running. That's just about how life slowed down during the great epizootic in 1872.

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a* or *b*.

- 1** This story shows
 - a** how people lived before they had buses and cars.
 - b** what happened when a sickness killed many horses.
- 2** Horses were very important in 1872 because they were
 - a** needed to make western films.
 - b** used to move people and things.
- 3** Because the sickness struck only horses, people
 - a** were not very worried.
 - b** did the work of horses.

4 Western films and TV shows today would be different if

- a** cowboys did not have horses to ride.
 - b** people lived in the West in 1872.
- 5** An epizootic today would *not* cause as much trouble because
- a** horses don't do as many jobs today.
 - b** there are enough horses today.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1** moved quickly (2)
- 2** something that carries a sickness (2)
- 3** buildings where things are made; large shops (4)
- 4** ill (6)
- 5** not similar (7)

C Read the words you wrote. Which one best fits in each sentence below? Write the word.

- 6** Horses passed the _____ from one to another.
- 7** The sickness _____ through New York City.
- 8** The flu bug made many horses _____.
- 9** There was no way to carry goods from _____ to shops.
- 10** The world would be very _____ without horses.

THINK ABOUT IT

- D** Read each story. Write *a* or *b* to answer each question.

John's wife and his horse were both very sick. John carried his wife to the carriage.

- 1 What did John do next?
 - a Put his wife into the carriage
 - b Used a neighbor's telephone
- 2 What did John do after that?
 - a Pulled the carriage to the doctor's house
 - b Waited for the doctor to come to John's house
- 3 How do you know what he did?
 - a He was sick. His doctor didn't have a carriage.
 - b His wife was sick. His horse was too sick to pull the carriage.

John arrived at the doctor's house. He told his wife he'd be right back. John knocked on the doctor's door.

- 4 What did John do next?
 - a Took the doctor to see his wife
 - b Asked the doctor to come and see his horse
- 5 How do you know what he did?
 - a His horse was in the barn.
 - b He said he'd be back.

- E** Most verbs add *-ed* to show that something happened in the past.

A horse *pulled* the wagon yesterday. Today a man *pulls* the wagon.

Read each sentence. If it could be happening now, write *now*. If it happened in the past, write *past*.

- 6 The horse falls down in the street.
- 7 Much of Boston burned down.
- 8 The men pull the fire wagon.
- 9 The bug killed many horses.
- 10 Traffic slowed down then.