

Although the story of the sweeping of Edward Moore, the first homeless man in Seattle, differs from today's sweep in specific laws, intention for familial care, and availability of resources, the sentiment of shipping off a human being to avoid dealing with them rather than confronting systemic issues or directly caring for them is a distressing throughline from the 1800s to now.

In his essay on modern homelessness, Eric Tars says, "rather than addressing the underlying lack of affordable housing, communities faced with increasingly visible homelessness began pushing homeless persons out of public view with laws criminalizing life-sustaining acts such as selfsheltering ("camping"), sleeping, resting, eating, or asking for donations" (Tars 43) When enforced, these laws are used to justify sweeps of homeless people and their encampments. Many modern criminalization laws aim to push those with no other place to go out of the public eye so they do not inconvenience people with homes. If they are arrested, they stay in jail and off the streets. If they are fined, they must relocate, and if there is nowhere else to relocate to, they could face arrest and harsher fines, and many end up being pushed out of the state with nowhere else to go. This is the modern justification for removing someone from the area to avoid dealing with them or the perceived 'issues' they raise in the community.

In Moore's case, however, the intention of his removal also had a basis in the idea of familial responsibility. The laws around homeless people and those who could not take care of themselves were taken largely from the poor laws developed in England. These laws stated that if a person could not provide for themselves, they must be put in the care of their families up to three generations before them. In Moore's case, his family lived across the country, so the only way to get him into their care was by shipping him off. When modern homeless people are pushed off the street, the government has no real intention of getting them back to someone who

can take care of them. It is also worth noting that the city of Seattle did not hand Moore over to his family until after the doctors and caretakers were told they would not be compensated for the cost of Moore's care, so the intentions were not all pure.

Regardless of the intention behind their forced removal, the community response of 'out of sight, out of mind,' remains unchanged. In her book, Ensign speaks of the end of Seattle's records of Moore. "'what became of him is unknown.' I wonder if it was a lack of curiosity, a dismissive attitude toward the significance of Edward Moore as a person, or a lack of modern search capacities for official records that has long had Moore simply disappear in the summer of 1856 onto the ship bound for Boston" (Ensign 30). To most, many homeless people who are kicked off the street also simply 'disappear.' As Ensign points out, the lack of information could have simply been about the time's lack of information. Moore's journey across the country in the 1800s made it difficult, if not impossible, to find or contact him from Seattle. Despite the difficulty of cross-country communication, it also seems likely that the community did not bother to follow up once Moore was out of the state. Although the availability of information has improved immensely since Moore's time, the scale of the homeless population has also greatly increased, making it more difficult to follow up on all those who have left the state. Given that it is the government enacting and justifying the sweeps, however, it is safe to say that most would not bother to even look for information on the people who have been forced out for attempting to survive.

Comparing the story of Edward Moore to today's homeless crisis helps us to understand the nuance of intentions behind government action and the city's lack of interest in following up on individuals they have forcibly removed.