THE HISTORY OF ZOOS

Today, the zoo is on the list of inevitable field trips and vacation destinations. There is no title, bloodline, or income bracket required for admission into any public zoo, whether the  Philadelphia Zoo or the London Zoo. It was not always this way: the first animal collections were symbols of prestige for kings and emperors, and later assembled for scientific study.

**The Period of Kings and Emperors**

With the advent of the *Pax Romana* and the Holy Roman Empire, exotic animals found their ways into the imperial collection through gifts from diplomatic envoys. In the 8th century, Emperor Charlemagne received gifts from the monarchs of Africa and Asia in the form of exotic animals, such as elephants.

Apart from the Holy Roman Empire, [William the Conqueror kept a small collection](http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/z2njq6f) at his Woodstock manor. In the 1100s, his son Henry I maintained and enlarged the menagerie, keeping camels, leopards, lions, lynxes, owls, and even a porcupine. In the 13th century, diplomatic gifts swelled the royal menagerie, such as 3 leopards from Emperor Frederick II, a white bear from the ruler of Norway, and an elephant from the ruler of France.

France began menageries in the 1600s, for staged fights. Animals were placed in small, caged enclosures under the amphitheaters, with a small yard for exercise. In the late 1600s, the [menagerie at Versailles](http://www.academia.edu/489189/The_Royal_Menageries_of_Louis_XIV_and_the_Civilizing_Process_Revisited) was built as a pleasure garden. Exotic animals were kept in enclosures, which were arranged in a circle facing a pavilion in which visitors could stay. This framework was emulated by other European rulers.

**The Period of the Scientists and the History of Zoos**

The Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment brought a new perspective and purpose to the menageries. This is when the term “zoo” started: it came from the longer scientific terminology “zoological garden.” The first zoos began in the late 18th century. One moved animals from the Versailles menagerie to a zoo in the *Jardin des Plantes*  primarily for scientific study.

The first [zoo created only for scientific purposes](http://designforlife.com.sg/thesis/12history.html) was the London Zoo in 1828, established by the Zoological Society of London. In 1831, the Dublin Zoo was created for the medical study of animals both alive and dead. In 1860 the Central Park Zoo was the first built in the United States, the Philadelphia Zoo following in 1874.

**The Period of the Public Audience**

In the 16th century, British royal menageries were opened to the public during the reign of Elizabeth I. In the 18th century, Emperor Francis I opened his private menagerie to the public as well. Later, with the advent of the zoological gardens, more were designed as public from the outside, such as the Central Park and Philadelphia Zoos.

**Evolution of Enclosures**

The Versailles-style cage-and-yard enclosure was only changed in 1907, by [Carl Hagenbeck](http://www.hagenbeck.de/en/tierpark/contact-information/history.html) in Stellingen, Germany. He was the first to use moats instead of bars, and matched the enclosures closer to the animals’ natural habitats.

However, moats are sometimes unstable means of enclosure, especially since extremely frightened or stressed animals have been known to leap even moats, such as during earthquakes. To counteract that, according to [Quality Dog Fence](http://www.qualitydogfence.com/), one possible solution is to use electric containment fences either as a replacement for or to supplement the current enclosure systems.