



Creating a Carriage Driving Library, by Deb McCarthy

Learning to improve one's carriage driving skills involves several things. Two of the most important are practical experience and being able to take advantage of other people's knowledge and expertise. While nothing can take the place of proper instruction, (lessons and clinics with safe and competent driving professionals), an exceptional way to increase one's knowledge is by reading books on the various aspects of carriage driving. Thankfully, there are many great books available on the subject and starting your own "carriage driving library" can be a fun and worthwhile activity. The knowledge you will have at your fingertips will pay dividends over and over. Many books will become constant reference material – ones you will look to again and again for dependable, practical and proven successful advice.

Get into the habit of looking around the vendor tents at driving shows. Many have sections specifically devoted to books and DVDs – you never know what you might find! If you are lucky enough to have a used book store in your area, check them out as well. Typically, the shop owners will have a section devoted to animals, and horses are usually a popular subject. I've found many nice books at bargain prices in used book stores. You just have to have patience and a little bit of luck. You may not always find what you're looking for, but when you do, it's usually very inexpensive.

Library book sales are another great place to find driving books. While it is a specialized subject, don't be discouraged and write them off entirely as a potential source if you don't immediately find any carriage driving books. There are usually wonderful horse books to be had, and it's not impossible to find what you're looking for in terms of carriage driving. Here's an interesting tip - I've found some gems in the library sales, but almost never in the animal section. They were in with history books, which when I thought about it, made perfect sense.

The American Driving Society and Carriage Association of America always have great books and reference material available. Many local driving clubs also have instructional materials for sale. Go to your local harness and tack shop - they almost always have a book section. If they don't have a particular book in stock, they are usually more than happy to special order things for you. And don't ever be afraid to ask for recommendations. A knowledgeable tack shop owner can be your best friend when it comes to getting the correct things. Whether it's a harness, whip or book, it's their business to know. So ask questions. Don't limit yourself to tack shops that are just in your area. With the internet, it is easy to look at inventory from tack shops all over the country –and in fact, all over the globe.

If you'd rather do all of your shopping online, finding books on the internet is as simple as going to your search engine of choice and typing in **Carriage Driving Books** on the search bar and hitting enter. This is usually the best way to find out of print and antiquarian books. The good thing about shopping the internet is you can compare prices and book condition quickly and easily. Don't shy away from buying pre-owned copies or what are known as "library discards". Buying used books saves money. Which means you can buy more books and put more money towards lessons. Unless you must have the new copy, a used one is just as good. eBay and Amazon are also invaluable resources.

While the books listed here are by no means the "be all and end all" list of carriage driving titles, it will give you a good start in putting together a wonderful and educational personal library. The same applies to the sources – there are always more to add to the list!

Happy Hunting and Happier Reading!