

A TRIBUTE TO THE HARVARD PIGEON LAB,
1948–1998

When the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* (*JEAB*) was founded, the Pigeon Lab in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University already was 10 years old. The Harvard Pigeon Lab and *JEAB* continued to influence one another for the next 40 years. The lab was closed in 1998. This special tribute to the Pigeon Lab on its closing was occasioned by its unique relationship to both *JEAB* and to the discipline that *JEAB* represents. It took shape from a symposium of the same title, presented at the annual convention of the Association for Behavior Analysis held in Washington, D.C. in May 2000.

The history, style, content, and significance of the scientific work that took place at the Harvard Pigeon Lab are detailed in the papers and reminiscences that follow. The first two papers, by Ferster and by Morse and Dews, describe the circumstances and research of the earliest years of the lab and are reprinted here from other sources. The next five papers describe other periods in the history of the lab and the impact of some of the work that occurred there. The reflections and comments were submitted by those who were students or collaborators in the lab. The dates in parentheses after comment authors' names are his or her dates of participation in the lab as a student or collaborator.

The environment that was the Harvard Pigeon Lab directly affected *JEAB* in at least four ways. First, from pigeon keys to schedules of reinforcement, the Pigeon Lab environment was a source of many of the research

methods and techniques still commonly used today by those who study learning and behavior. Second, the roots of a significant amount of the experimental research published in *JEAB* today can be traced back to work that first was undertaken at the Pigeon Lab at some point in the past. Third, a similar point can be made about theoretical developments, not the least of which is the matching law and its offshoots that became the quantitative analysis of behavior, so well represented in the comments that follow. Finally, five of the 13 editors of *JEAB*, as well as many of its associate editors and reviewers, were either trained at or otherwise directly associated with the Harvard Pigeon Lab at some point in their scientific careers.

Most members of *JEAB*'s scientific community have been influenced indirectly by the lab through being taught and mentored by those originally trained there or by the myriad publications emanating from both the lab and its students as they have moved through their own productive careers. It was a unique physical and verbal environment that now has been reproduced, tinkered with, modified, refined, developed, and adapted to myriad local environments. Indeed, although now closed in its original location, the Harvard Pigeon Lab certainly lives on in small and large laboratories around the world, with its influence not only reproduced but, in fact, multiplied many fold over its original "happy few."

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Editor