



Book: Out Of The Darkness: The Story of Mary Ellen Wilson

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In New York City back in April of 1874, a most unusual event took place. A severely abused nine-year-old girl named Mary Ellen Wilson became the first child in America to be rescued from an abusive home. She had been beaten, burned, slashed with scissors, locked in a closet, and had never been outside of her tenement home in over 7 years. Thanks to the concern and dedication of a missionary named Etta Wheeler, the child was finally saved from her cruel captors. Henry Bergh's ASPCA -- yes, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals -- was instrumental in securing her rescue. When no other agencies would become involved, the ASPCA used its power and influence to not only save Mary Ellen, but to charter the first organization of its kind to prevent cruelty to children, the NYSPCC -- the New York Society for the Prevention of.