

HISTORY OF THE SIAMESE

By Carlton Boren

"Grace of the Panther, Intelligence of the Elephant, Affection of the Love-bird, Beauty of the Fawn, Softness of Down, Swiftiness of Light." Thus was the **Siamese Cat** so fashioned one of the Oriental Gods, as the legend goes upon being petitioned by a feminine favorite. The origin of the Siamese Cat is lost in antiquity. They are believed to have come from Khorat, the province of Northeastern Siam.

The Siamese is named for the land of its origin. According to legend, they were first seen in the temples of Siam, being sometimes referred to as the "Sacred Siamese", and they were kept as pets and "Watch-Cats" to warn the priests of intruders.

Rather vague records tell us Siamese cats first reached England in 1884, and the following year they made their initial public appearance at a show held in the Crystal Palace in London. Legend has it that when the departing British Consul-General went to pay his farewell call on the King of Siam, he was given a pair of Siamese cats to take home to England. And so Mr. Owen Gould is credited with the importation of England's first Siamese cats. In Frances Simpson's "The Book of the Cat", published in 1903, she states that the first cat show held in the Crystal Palace was in 1871. There were some unusual Short-hair cats at this show, but, we must assume, there were none exhibited that had the true Siamese pattern. She further states in her book that "Miss Forestier Walker and her sister, Mrs. Vyvyan, were amongst the first to introduce Siamese Cats into England, and they always owned a direct descendant from the first and famous 'Tiam-O-Shian'.

A pair from the Palace were given to Mrs. Vyvyan and myself in 1884-5. Among the earliest importers of the Siamese were Sir Robert Herbert, Lady Dorothy Nevill, the Rev. S. Baring-Gould and Mrs. Cunliffe Lee." It is interesting to note that Frances Simpson calls attention to two distinct varieties: (1) The royal Cat of Siam, cream colored in body, with sharply defined markings on head, ears, legs, feet, and tail; eyes a decided blue and (2) Chocolate cats that are deep brown in color, showing hardly any markings, and blue eyes.

It is from these early imports that most of today's Siamese cats are descended. The popularity of the Siamese Cat has grown fantastically, until today, it is the most popular and fascinating short-hair cat.

In America the records of early Siamese cats are even more vague and uncertain than the English ones. There is no authenticated record as to who was the first Siamese Cat owner in America, much less as to which Siamese cat was first to arrive. There have been many claims to such ownership and to such a cat, but none have been conclusively verified.



Tiam-O-Shian IV

Harold Basset, writing in *The Cat Review*, July 1909, states that Mme. Blanche Arral of Grantwood, N. J., brought the first Siamese cat to America, after visiting Siam on a concert tour. Mme. Arral writes in *The Cat Journal*, in 1911, that the first Siamese cat ever seen by her was in 1902 while on tour in Siam.

Writing in *Colliers*, April 20, 1946, Nina Wilcox Putman, in her article, "The Warrior Cats", points up the importation of a pair of Siamese cats to the United States by Commander Hovey-King, U. S. Naval Officer.

Frances Simpson goes to say, "In America the Fancy has gone ahead in a wonderful way. It was in 1895 that the first cat show of general interest was held at Madison Square Garden, New York. There had previously been some private attempts to have exhibitions of Cats in connection with poultry and pigeon shows. In 1896 an American Cat Club was organized, which did some good work. Then Chicago started a Cat Club in January, 1899, and this was followed by a most successful enterprise on the part of Mrs. Clinton Locke, who founded the Beresford Cat Club, called after Lady Marcus Beresford of England."

Mr. Charles A. Kenny, the Editor and Publisher of *Cats Magazine* from 1945 to 1951, gives 1890 as the date of arrival of the first Siamese in America.

In Volume I of the Beresford Cat Club Book, published in 1900, gives a list of entries from July 1899 to July 1900. Two Siamese cats are listed, a Seal male, Lockehaven Siam #138, and a Chocolate female, Sally Ward #139. Both of these cats were owned by Mrs. Clinton Locke, 2825 Indiana Ave., Chicago, Illinois. The male, Lockehaven Siam, was purchased in France by Mrs. Locke and was a "direct importation of Siam". Lockehaven Sally Ward was purchased by Mrs. Spencer of Sandusky, Ohio, but owned at the time of registration by Mrs. Locke. It is not indicated if this cat was imported by Mrs. Spencer, nor if she was the breeder. The birth dates and pedigrees of these two cats are listed as Unknown.

Two more Siamese are listed in Volume 2 of the Beresford Stud Book, which covers a period of registration from July 1900 to July 1901. Both were imports and born in 1897. They were listed as a male chocolate Siamese, Netherlands Tilu #308, and a female Chocolate, Netherlands Ma #309. Both cats were originally owned by Mrs. Clinton Locke, who purchased them from Lady Marcus Beresford. The two cats were bred by Mrs. Sutherland.

In Volume 3 of the Beresford Stud Book, covering 1901 to 1903, four Siamese are listed. Chone #510, a Neuter Seal, born 1899, owned by Mrs. Mary P. Freeman, San Francisco, Calif., bred by Mrs. A. H. Hoag, also of San Francisco. The sire is given as Siam and the dame, Angora Rowdy #532. Angora Rowdy is also listed as a Seal female, born 1894, but no pedigree is given. Rowdy was imported by Postmaster Gen. Hastings, but was owned at



Mrs. Clinton Locke and her Siamese Kittens "Calif" and "Bangkok."

the time of registration by Mrs. Hoag. This then reveals what appears to be the first American bred Siamese, a Neuter named Chone. The third listing is Angora Sikh #533, a Seal male, born August 14, 1899, also owned by Mrs. Hoag, but bred by Mrs. Christian Reiss. Mrs. Reiss' address is not given. The fourth listing is Madison California #708, a male Seal out of Rowdy bred by Mrs. Hoag. The owner is Charles H. Lane, Chicago. No birth date given. Many of the first American-bred Siamese are from Mrs. Hoag's famed Angora Cattery. In 1903 she sold Chemita, a Queen, to Mrs. Mandeville of Boston, and this launched the interest in New England.

Only one Siamese, a female Seal, Angora Kiobe #868, is listed in Volume 4 which covered July 1903 to July 1905. Kiobe, born July 9, 1902, was bred by Mrs. Tilden, Kiobe, Japan, and was also owned by Mrs. Hoag.

From these early records, which are written proof, we know that Siamese Cats were OWNED in America prior to July 1900. The Beresford Cat Club of America had as its Recorder Lucy C. Johnstone.

Although it is impossible to identify the person owning the first Siamese Cat in America and the name of that first Siamese, we do have records of the earliest shows, and some of the above mentioned Siamese did their share of winning in these first shows. Madison California and Sally Ward stood out above the others on the show bench. They had been sold to Mrs. Lucy Johnstone. Madison California was the first Siamese in America to earn a Championship, and Sally Ward, the second. Both died in 1905, probably from enteritis.

Lockehaven Siam, shown by his new owner, Mrs. W. E. Colburn of Chicago, was the first Siamese to win a Best Cat award. This remarkable win was made at the Michigan Cat Club Show held in Detroit in 1907.

The following year a second Siamese, Lockehaven Elsa, a female, won Best Cat in an All Breed Show, the Beresford Cat Club show, held in Chicago. Mr. Louis Wain of London, the eminent English Illustrator and cat authority, was the Judge. Lockehaven Elsa was American bred and was purchased by Mrs. Clinton Locke from the breeder, Mrs. Louis Swift of Lake Forrest, Illinois.

The Best Cat Awards, given two years in succession, placed the Siamese cat in a new light as far as breeder-exhibitor interest was concerned. More and more the interest in this beautiful cat began to spread over the country.

In 1909, the first CFA Stud Book was published and the President of the Cat Fanciers' Association, Mrs. W. F. Hofstra of Hempstead, Long Island, New York, became the Eastern pioneer of Siamese. As we have already said, Mrs. Hofstra bought the two chocolate Siamese from Mrs. Locke, Tilu and Ma. Both ruled the East for a long time and were the ancestors of many American bred Siamese in that area.

Another early exhibitor of Siamese was Miss Jane Cathcart of Oradell, New Jersey, who imported many of her cats from England and France, including her famous **Champion Siam de Paris**.

Mrs. H. G. Dykhouse of Grand Rapids, Mich., also aided in the development of the breed. She shipped Siamese to every section of the country. Two of her outstanding specimens were Romeo Siam, a male, and Ch. Romeo Ananda, a female.

American breeder-exhibitors, though, had their troubles with the breed. The animals were delicate and produced small litters. There were many losses through gastro-enteritis. Efforts were made by the editors of cat journals to obtain additional information on the breeding, raising and care of the Siamese

from England. With all this interest which was created, the founding of the Siamese Cat Society of America came about in 1909.

After 1910 the Siamese Cat came into its own in America. Only the tenacity of the interested, enthusiastic American breeder, who had the money to purchase these cats, enabled the breed to become thoroughly established.

The early Siamese that had been imported from various places cost not less than a thousand dollars, plus transportation charges and other fees. This is a conservative figure, as often prices were higher. In America, the American bred stock, second and third generation, was selling for \$200.00 up to \$1000.00, the price based on the ancestry of the animal. And, so it was that price, which was determined by supply and demand, along with the risk involved, were the things which plagued the growth of the Siamese in America.

Miss Jane Cathcart, whom we have already mentioned, made her "hobby" a paying success. She had established a cattery for the domestic short-hair to begin with, but now she became interested in the foreign varieties. She went to Europe several times bringing back with her the best specimens of Siamese, Abyssinians, Australians and Russian Blues that she could find in England and on the Continent. She had a good head for business, and a flair for showmanship. She advertised in all the cat publications of her day as well



Ch. Siam de Paris

as the New York newspapers and built up a tremendous trade in cats, which resulted in her establishing another branch office, in Rochester, N. Y., with Mrs. Elizabeth L. Brace in charge. Mrs. Brace was the founder of the chief cat publication between 1912 and 1940, The Cat Courier, and she later became a well known and sought for judge. Mrs. Cathcart knew just about all there was to know about raising, breed-

ing and showing cats. She attended nearly every exhibition with her animals, and in this way she built up contacts for sales to every section of America. She operated the first cat Boarding House in America. Her cattery was named The Black Short Hair Cattery, Inc., because of her first love for the Short-haired Domestic cat. Her Siamese, **Ch. Siam de Paris**, which she had brought back from Paris, on her first trip to Europe, was a popular exhibit at the shows, and was often used for publicity purposes. Finally, he was sold for \$475, the purchaser requested to remain anonymous.

Another personality of the day, whose articles did much to establish the popularity of the Siamese breed was the previously mentioned Mrs. H. G. Dykhouse of Grand Rapids, Mich. Originally a breeder of Blue Eyed White Persians and Silvers, Mrs. Dykhouse became a powerful figure in the Cat Fancy throughout the country, and remained so up to the time of her death in the middle Thirties. She, too, combed the catteries of England and America determined to buy the finest, regardless of cost. She obtained excellent stock. Her first purchase was a Siamese female from Mrs. Chilcott of England.

named Ananda. This cat was sired by Ch. Kew King of Siam, who was said to be the finest Siamese in England at the time. She then purchased a male, Romeo Siam, a first generation American bred Siamese, from Mrs. L. A. Swift of Lake Forest, Illinois. Mrs. Dykhouse added other well known stock, and so she began her breeding. At the shows that were held between 1895 and 1949, there were 15 Best Cat Awards given Siamese. Out of these awards Mrs. Dykhouse won two. Her first win was with her Romeo Blue Bell, in 1912, at the first show held by the Minneapolis Cat Club. Her second win was made with a female Siamese, Romeo Me Yome, and this win took place at the South Bend, Indiana, Cat Show. Many judges thought her male was the best in America, and Romeo Kee-Wan-Kee was given a write-up as such in the Cat Courier in a 1917 issue. Mrs. Dykhouse was President of the Siamese Cat Society in 1909. She continued to serve in that capacity until 1913.

Dr. G. D. Hindley of Carpenteria, California, was the greatest pioneer of Siamese in the far west. In the Golden Era between 1910 and 1916 Dr. Hindley became famous for his Siamese. For many years he studied the breed, and made his purchases, first in England, and then in the Orient. His finest purchase was Guyo, a male, who had won Best Cat at a show in Santa Barbara, Calif., in 1910. Guyo was owned by Mrs. C. C. Park of Los Angeles at the time of the exhibition, and it was from her he purchased the cat. The show was held under the rules of The Western Cat Association, a small organization limited for the most part to Southern California. Dr. Hindley owned a female named Marcova and, from this mating to his new male, Guyo, he obtained several fine litters, one kitten of this breeding was the famous Romeo Blue Bell, which was purchased by Mrs. Dykhouse. Romeo Blue Bell had a famous kitten, named Romeo Blitzen Bentz, whose sire was the English import, Romeo Kee-Wan-Kee. Romeo Blue Bell died shortly after the show in Minneapolis, which was a great loss to the Fancy, as she been acclaimed the finest Female Siamese ever to appear in the American shows. But, Romeo Blue Bell had left the son to carry on, and he made a great name for himself in the shows throughout the Mid-West and Canada.



Ch. Lady Sonia

Atlantic Cat Club, Mr. H. J. Vidal judging. Ch. Lady Sonia was competing against the cream of the Long-Haired cats in the East and Midwest at the time. Her second win came in 1915, at the Greenwich, Conn., show with Sonitska winning the Best Cat Award, Mrs. Elizabeth Brace judging. Mrs.

The East's outstanding personality, as far as the Siamese was concerned was Mrs. F. Y. Mathis of Greenwich, Conn., who originally, like Mrs. Dykhouse, had been interested in the Persian. She, too, availed herself of the finest stock, and met with wonderful success, both in the show ring, and in the sale of her stock. Mrs. Mathis won a Best Cat award for her Siamese in 1913 at the New York City cat show held by the At-

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Mathis herself later became a well known judge whose services were in constant demand.

The late Gertrude E. Taylor, Syracuse, New York, Secretary of the Siamese Cat Society, was another pioneer of the Siamese. She did much to promote interest in the breed by her many articles which appeared in *The Cat Courier*. She obtained some fine Siamese. Her most famous was, perhaps, Hjalmar of Sailina, a male, which was sold to Mrs. B. E. Watson, and which was Best Cat at the show staged at Aurora, Illinois, in 1915.

As we reach the mid-twenties and the early thirties we find the torch for the Siamese being carried by many other outstanding personalities and breeders. One outstanding personality who contributed to the propagation of the Siamese in this era was Mrs. H. E. Naatz of Cleveland, Ohio. Mrs. Naatz became very prominent in the Cat Fancy. She served as President of The Siamese Cat Society from 1929-1930. She is widely remembered for her importation of Siamese Star Adamina, which she imported from England in 1925, from Miss C. Fisher. Adamina was a Seal Point female who threw many Blue Points during her breeding career. Two months after Adamina arrived in this country, she was exhibited at the Michigan State Fair, in the All Breed Show, and won the Best Cat award. Mrs. Naatz possessed many other fine Siamese, some imported, and some of her own breeding. The Siamese Star Cattery became famous for one named Siamese Star Prince Favo. Also, Wang-Ho of Storisende and Adamina II of Storisende. The last two were owned by Mr. Burton Eddy of Little Silver, N. J. In 1931 Wang-Ho of Storisende won Best Cat in a Siamese Specialty Show at New York, competing against 49 other Siamese. Mrs. Naatz did not hesitate to sell even her finest specimens and this did much to build up America's stock and enable other breeders to obtain some of her fine bloodline. And, thus, with a possible few exceptions, the pioneers of the rip-roaring Twenties and Thirties, obtained at least part of their foundation stock from Mrs. Naatz and her famous Siamese Star Cattery.

In 1925 Mrs. Martin Metcalf established a cattery in Washington, D. C. She imported some outstanding Siamese from Manila, Siam, China and France. She also obtained some of Mrs. Naatz' Siamese Star stock, mostly Blue Points. Her Djer-Kits Cattery became famous. Among her best Siamese was one owned by Mrs. Virginia Cobb, Ch. Djer-Kits Chinkaling of Newton, Imp. She was also known as the owner of that famous Ch. Cordome's Djer-Kits' Po-Go of Paris and Silka, a daughter of Po-Go. Silka compiled an enviable record and became both an ACA and CFA champion. Mrs. Metcalf was a former Recorder of CFA.

In 1926, Mrs. Elizabeth Bearden of Aldan, Pa., established her Cattery, which featured Siamese exclusively. Her foundation stock was three female Siamese from the Siamese Star cattery of Mrs. Naatz and a male, Bonzo II. She called her cattery Ming Kwong. Mrs. Bearden was Vice President of the Siamese Cat Society in 1931, and later Honorary President.

Another well known Siamese breeder of this era was Mrs. Karl B. Norton of White Plains, N. Y. Mrs. Norton owned many outstanding Siamese, and she, too, had as her foundation stock, some of the fine Siamese Star cats. She served as Vice President of The Siamese Cat Society from 1936 to 1940. In 1948, she became Secretary of CFA. She also became a Siamese judge. In 1948 she also published a book, "Cats", which was very helpful to those desiring to organize a cat club.

Another outstanding personality at this time was Mr. Burton Eddy, who,

in addition to becoming known for his Storisend Siamese cat, also was noted as the author of "The Panther of the Hearth". This article appeared in the National Geographic Magazine in November, 1938. The article has colored pictures of nearly every known breed of cat, along with some of their history. The pictures of the Siamese in color are very well done, as are the beautiful pictures of the Persians and a few Domestic Short-hairs. Mr. Eddy served as President of the Siamese Cat Society from 1931 to 1934. He was also the Publisher of The Cat Gazette.

At a show held in Madison Square Garden in New York City in 1928, Mrs. Martin Metcalf exhibited some fine Siamese cats. It was at this show that Mrs. Virginia Cobb of Newton, Mass., saw her first Siamese. She became so fascinated by them that she soon purchased a Seal Point Siamese female as a Christmas present for Mr. Cobb. This female Siamese became the well-known Ch. Djer-Kits Chinkaling of Newton, Imp., who raised a family of 96 kittens, and lived to the ripe old age of 16 years. "Chinky" was truly a well known cat and much loved by all who knew her. When she died, a Siamese Specialty Show was held in her honor as a Memorial. This Show was financed by her many friends in the Fancy. Another famous cat of Newton, who also lived to a ripe old age, was the Siamese Seal Point male, Ch. Oriental Nanki Pooh of Newton, Imp., whose name appears in so many pedigrees. "Nikki" holds the record in America for the most offspring, sons and daughters, who have made their Championships. He lived to be 17 years old, and sired over 1300 kittens. What a record! A Memorial Show was held for him by the Short Hair Club of New England in 1955 in connection with the Golden Anniversary show of the Boston Cat Club. In the catalogue of that Show there is a list of many well known names of today's Siamese Breeders who owned "Nikki's" descendants. There have been many other famous cats Newton. Mrs. Cobb's Grand Champions included Grand Ch. Newton's Jay Tee, Grand Ch. Chindwin's Singumin of Newton, and Grand Ch. Newton's Desiree. Just like Mrs. Naatz, Mrs. Cobb sold some of her finest stock all over America, and thus she kept alive the interest in fine Siamese. Many were the prizes won by her Newton stock. Her Grand Ch. Newton's Jay Tee, Imp., was the first Seal Point to win a CFA Grand Championship. This Seal Point female finished her Grand Championship points at the age of 10, and won her first Grand Ch. points at the age of eight. For a female to retain her beauty and youthful contours at eight or ten is indeed an accomplishment, and any Siamese Breeder could be proud of such an animal. Grand Ch. Newton's Desiree won two Best Cat Awards in All Breed Shows.

Mrs. Cobb became one of the most outstanding Siamese breeders and exhibitors in America and has carried on for thirty years. We cannot give her enough credit for her enthusiastic interest and her other accomplishments to establish the genetic background of the Siamese cat with especial relation to other breeds and colors of cats. Much of her work, as a joint undertaking with Dr. Clyde E. Keeler, Geneticist of Harvard University was recorded in the Journal of Heredity, Washington, D. C., in May, 1933. In addition to breeding and showing, she has been a regular and enthusiastic contributor to cat periodicals. She served as Secretary and Treasurer of The Siamese Cat Society from 1933 to 1940. She is best known in genetical circles for her research relative to the Long Hair Siamese experiments. These experiments were begun in 1930 and were published again in the final stage of the experiment in the Journal of Heredity in September of 1936. (To Be Continued)