

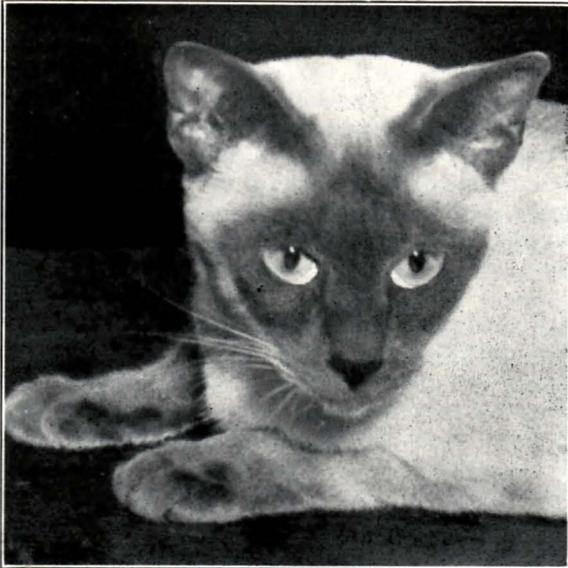
## HISTORY OF THE SIAMESE CAT

By **Carlton Boren**, with collaboration

By the mid-nineteen thirties, the Siamese cat was well established in the United States, and homebred Siamese out-numbered imported specimens. It had taken half a century to acquaint the public with these truly fascinating members of the feline family. But once they became known, their unique form and grace, their spectacular coloring, wierd throaty voices, and appealing personalities took a lasting hold on the public fancy.

About 1935 we began to hear of the Rosedere Cattery, owned by Miss Emma C. Payne of Falls Church, Virginia. This cattery produced outstanding seal point Siamese as well as fine long haired cats. The Rosedere Siamese, like the majority of the other best bloodlines of that era, were strongly based on the Siamese Star cats, and also carried the lovely Ming Kwong blood, which in turn drew heavily on the Siamese Star mother-lode. In 1940 Amdos Sycel and Amdos Pacel were added to the Rosedere line and bred to descendants of Miss Payne's English import, Rosedere Shanson (born 1934), a son of England's famous Soniboi. Shan Son was richly endowed with the matchless Ch. Bonzo blood and also carried the Prestwick line, outstanding for brilliant eye color, fine type, and gentle, affectionate disposition.

Ch. Bonzo (born 1924) had been the "type-setter" of the breed. Show-type Siamese in England were, almost without exception, descended from him. It was not uncommon to find Bonzo's name appearing as many as ten to fifteen times in the total ancestry of a fine cat of the era.



CH. AMDOS CELSAYA (born 1939)

Another breeder who left her mark distinctively on the quality of Siamese cats in America was Mrs. Alexander Pinney, of Scarsdale, New York. Her famous Rasna cats stemmed largely from the Siam Cattery of Mrs. Karl B. Norton, and back of that, from the Siamese Star imports. Rasna cats also carried some **Newton** blood. To many fanciers, Rasna blue points are especially memorable for their superb portraits which appear in the cat magazines of the time. The portrait of Ch. Rasna's Tarquin (born 1938) stands out as a

classic of the twin arts of cat breeding and cat photography.

A great new bloodline, Amdos, dawned on the American scene in this era. In 1938 Mme. A. M. d'Ollone of West Nyak, New York, was accorded the honor of being invited to England as a show judge. She was thus provided with a unique opportunity to meet in person virtually the entire English cat fancy and to see and compare their cats as only a show judge can, whereas other breeders had generally been limited to dealing by correspondence with one or a few breeders, when selecting cats to import.

From her wide and tempting field, Mme. d'Ollone made some historic selections. For herself she chose, among others, a seal point pair, Prestwick Plush and Padraic of Bedale (son of the flawless Blarney of Bedale), and a blue point female, Celeste (of the famous Abingdon strain). She had previously imported Ch. Sayo of Bedale, England's first blue pointed champion. These four cats constituted the main basis of the Amdos strain.

For Miss Muriel Glenz (Azure-Yze Cattery, Hempstead, New York) she brought a seal point, Krispin of Abingdon; and for Mrs. Fredric Hokin (Dark Gauntlets Cattery, Los Angeles, California) she chose Prestwick Polka, a seal point male carrying a chocolate factor.

Because of an earlier, tragic experience with enteritis after a show, Mme. d'Ollone no longer exhibited her cats, but Amdos offspring, shown by their purchasers, created a stir wherever exhibited. Their long Prestwick heads, dazzling Bedale eye color, firm slender muscle structure, flat silky coats, and tall, emphatically "pricked" (that is, upright) ears, seemed like a break-through of the normal ceiling on reasonably expected progress. In many areas of the country the Amdos cats served as a useful jolt to the complacency of breeders who had become accustomed to easy victories with strains which had, in some cases, been permitted to dwindle from the original excellence of their imported English ancestors, perhaps as a consequence of the unfortunate fad of those days for emphasizing color contrast even at the expense of type.

The Amdos cats served to illustrate dramatically that the great beauty of the breed lay in its type, not merely in color contrast. Thus they benefited the Siamese fancy in three important ways: by providing an impetus to better, more type-conscious judging; by endowing the breed with their own priceless genetic heritage; and by triggering a wave of eager importation of other English cats. This wave has continued on its own momentum to the present day, except for its temporary interruption during the war years.

Many breeders in widely separate parts of the nation worked with stock from the Amdos line, sometimes combining it with other fine cats such as Siamese Star descendants or additional English imports, each strain thereby acquiring distinctive characteristics of its own. Among these breeders were Mr. and Mrs. Sven Nelson (Ebon Mask Cattery), who owned Ch. Amdos Yankee (born 1944) and some fine later imports from England. Yankee was the sire of their famous Ch. H.R.H. of Ebon Mask (born 1948). Mrs. Nelson is well known as the author of the "Siamese Cat Book".

Mrs. Jean Birch, (Andover Cattery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) was the first owner of the immortal Ch. Amdos Attavist, sire of her beautiful Ch. Koa Khandahara of Andover.

Mrs. Frederick Hokin's Ch. Amdos Plu-Padi and Ch. Amdos Celsaya

(both born 1939), were outstanding winners of their time, like so many other Amdos cats. With Prestwick Polka these cats formed the nucleus of



PRESTWICK POLKA (born 1938)

cattery name and most of her cats over to Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Manley. The Manleys already owned a descendant of Ch. Amdos Plu-Padi and some Rosedere-Amdos-blooded stock bred by Mrs. Zelma Phillips (Mandarine Cattery), and in 1961 they imported Bingtang Batik, an all-Prestwick female. After some years they succeeded in persuading Mrs. Hoskin to accept a promising blue point female kitten, which later became Grand and Triple Ch. Dark Gauntlets Desmine, and this was the end of retirement for Mrs. Hokin.



PUSHKARA  
born 1937)

Of all the breeders who worked with Amdos, its most ardent supporter was Price Cross, "Mr. Cat Fancy" himself. Mr. Cross is lovingly remembered for his selfless, unstinted aid and encouragement to breeders of every variety and breed of cat, but his devotion to the Amdos strain exceeded all his other enthusiasms. He was determined that it should not be lost to the fancy by adulteration with less excellent strains or those bearing pet-quality or hybrid blood, but he always encouraged crossing it with its peers.

His "Mao" prefix, usually combined with a color word, as in "Mao Seal" or "Mao Blue", is a proud adornment on any pedigree, and serves notice that the cat which bears it comes from none but the finest ancestors known to the breed. He imported Cathsiam Indeg (born 1948) whose Hoveton, Abingdon, and Petaling heredity he deemed a worthy match for his Amdos line. Mated to Amdos Imperator, Indeg produced the fantasti-

of the Dark Gauntlets strain, via which Amdos blood spread to many other breeders from the late thirties to the present day. To this base was added the heritage of other fine English bloodlines, and the Amdos heredity was later reinforced by cats from Price Cross. Mrs. Hokin's Alastor of Dark Gauntlets (born 1940) sired by Prestwick Polka (Imp) ex Pushkara of the Dark Gauntlets, was an early source of both fine type and the chocolate point coloring in the west.

In 1949 Mrs. Hokin, wishing to retire from cat-breeding, turned her

cally typey, dainty boned Mao Seal Nzzaboi (born 1950), sire of the matchless Double Ch. Cuthpa Nuzano, Mr. Cross's most famous cat. Nuzano was bred by Mrs. Pauline Cuthbertson (Cuthpa Cattery, Lufkin, Texas) from Cuthpa Anavist, a daughter of Ch. Amdos Atavist ex Mao Seal Angelina.

Mrs. Cuthbertson worked with the Amdos line in close cooperation with Price Cross. Other famous cats of her line, Ch. Cuthpa D'Ista, Ch. Cuthpa Dhympo, Ch. Cuthpa Linale, and many more, have endowed many a present day winning strain with a sound basis for its success. Mrs. Grace Forrest's lovely Bograe line is one that comes readily to mind, but there are many more.

Mrs. Anabel Hoyt (Tyoh Cattery, Grapevine, Texas), breeder of the elegant Ch. Tyoh Nusta, son and present-day heir to the mantle of Nuzano; and Mr. B. A. Lauder (Purple Sage Cattery, Fort Worth, Texas), breeder of Ch. Purple Sage Padraic and Purple Sage Plush, son of Ch. Amdos Atavist, are among the many others who produced fine Siamese from Amdos stock with the aid and encouragement of Price Cross.

The most marked expansion during this period came in the West and Northwest where many new catteries were established in the late thirties.

In 1936 Mrs. Dorothy K. Yates (Yates-de-Airy Cattery) formerly of Philadelphia, moved to Van Nuys, California, bringing much-needed English blood and the chocolate gene into the West. Her stock was based on Glenville, Saigon, Ming Kwong, Lanfine, and of course, Siamese Star blood, as well as (Imported) Kimi of Yates-de-Airy, a typey female from Paris.

Another breeder of this era deserves special mention for her significant, though practically anonymous, contribution to the breed. Unlike most newcomers to the breed, Jean Girard Meunier began her quest for Siamese by reading the show standard and visualizing with remarkable clarity the attributes of the cat it described. Thanks to her sharp-eyed and uncompromising quest for living examples of that image, she managed to obtain outstanding specimens from some of the finest bloodlines of her time.

Her chief stud, King Kambus (born 1936; not to be confused with King Kambu II, an unrelated cat of a later era) combined Ming Kwong blood — Tzu-An, Ch. Wen Boa, and Bonzo II — with Ch. Saigon's Coo Coo, and Sadko of Stonehedge, linebred back to his glorious dam, Ch. Siamese Star Mee Zee of Saline (born 1925). This cat was so beautiful in wedge head, general type and color contrast that she would have been formidable competition for today's top show winners. Another stud, The Pagoda's Hu Wen (brother of Mrs. Helen Etherton's top winning Tzu-Zarra) carried much of the same blood as King Kambus; and a female, Naga of Yates-de-Airy was descended from Ch. Lanfine Sing Po of Ming Po of Ming Kwong and various Siamese Star lines.

Since Jean Girard Meunier did not exhibit or advertise her cats, she was unknown to the cat fancy for a long time, but the quality of her cats was so outstanding that once the news of them reached the breeders, it spread by word of mouth and gradually the cat world began to beat a path to her door. Mrs. George H. Livingston bought Ghengis Khan; Mrs. Frederic

Hokin came seeking a mate for imported Prestwick Polka, fell in love with Pushkara, Jean Girard's favorite, and would not take "no" for an answer.

Mrs. Helen Fairchild chose Nyima and made a champion of her. Mr. Roy Easterly bought Chen Risi; Mrs. Lowell Beers bought Yang-Kui-Fei, a chocolate with a superb cinnamon tone to her points and also Queen Lalla, whose mating to Prestwick Polka produced Lita Mita, distaff-side granddam of the famous Ch. Pukka Rajah, which, as a popular stud, did much to improve type of California Siamese. Another of Pukka's grandparents was Vasuki, which was also from Jean Girard's stock.

It is a fairly conservative estimate that well over half of today's winner's in the West, largely or in part owe their eye color and slant, their long bodies and fine bone, their smooth wedge heads and even their pale body color, to their repeated descent from this nameless family of magnificent cats. A note on the back of the accompanying portrait of Pushkara reads: "A poor picture of her, taken when fat." Any experienced breeder of Siamese knows that fat distorts the head and the proportion of the ears to it, as gravely as it distorts the body. Deducting a little on the sides for fat, we see an excellent wedge head.



**BINTANG BATIK (born 1951)**

Dr. and Mrs. Harold L. Fairchild (Fairchild Cattery, Carlsbad, California) started their strain with Manchu Kagan Ssu, a cat of very bold color contrast. Later, to improve type, they brought in Eastern blood by adding Fairchild's Sy-Ki, a son of Ch. Sy Mingo of Newton ex Ch. Ki-Ku-Ko (Glenville and Siamese Star blood) bred by Mr. Max Hainert. The Fairchilds also bought Aditi of Newton, in kitten to Ch. Oriental Nanki Poo of Newton (Imp). This mating produced, among others, Fairchild's Chang-An of Newton and Fairchild's Pang Yo of Newton, which, bred to Ch. Fairchild's Nyima, produced Fairchild's Mei Lan of Mei Li, and was part of the stock on which June and Charles Williams based their Mei Li Cattery.

Both Dr. and Mrs. Fairchild were active in the fancy. Mrs. Fairchild became a CFA judge in 1948, making her debut by judging the first show for the National Siamese Cat Club, at the Golden Gate Cat Club in Oakland, California. The Fairchilds' book, "Cats and All About Them," became a best seller about the year 1942 and is still much read by breeders.

Mrs. Fairchild deserves special credit for having sought out Mrs. George Martyn's lovely (Imported) Paletta Rob, and having had the good luck and good taste to breed a cat to him. Rob and his mate, Cremit, a daughter of Ch. Angus Silky, had been selected for Dr. and Mrs. Martyn by Mrs. Phyl Wade (Bedale Cattery, England), one of the leading authorities on the Siamese cat in her time, and the author of a book on the breed. Although

neither Rob nor Cremist lived long, their offspring, Kiora, Roberta, Princess Jawe, Cremist II, and Paletta Peter, survived them and left descendants. Shamshu, a son of Roberta, mated to Ch. Amdos Plu-Padi, produced Padishah of Dark Gauntles; Wee Wendy, a daughter of Peter ex his sister, Cremist II, became the dam of Ch. Pukka Rajah. Via these cats and others the Martyn strain had had a wide influence on Siamese in the West.

Mrs. Helen Etherton became the partner of Mr. Roy Easterly in breeding Siamese. Beside Jean Girard's Chen Risi and the famous Tzu-Zarra, they owned Samite Madam Butterfly (born 1935), a cat of predominantly Siamese Star and Yates-de-Airy background, which they bred to Fairchild's Sy-Ki. Mr. Easterly and Mrs. Etherton wrote a useful book on "How to Judge Siamese". They were early advocates of the scoring system in judging and are both present-day CFA judges.

The Knight Cattery in Oswego, Oregon, started with a blue point from Mrs. Warren's Casa Gatos Cattery, and later added a kitten from the Fairchild Cattery, plus some Newton and San Gabriel (now Quinn's) stock. They also purchased two males from Mr. Davis of Denver, Colorado. They raised some very fine Siamese, and became well-known for their blue points. Mrs. Knight became a show judge and was prominent in the fancy in the Northwest for a number of years.

An early booster of "tan points", as chocolate points were then called in the West, was Mrs. Ruth Fisher. She was one of the first breeders there to call attention to the fact that their coloring was a consistently recurring genetic characteristic and as such, should have a color class of its own. Her Siamese stem, on their distaff side, from her grand old matriarch cat, Pymee Ma How, 'Sammy', as she was affectionately known to the local fancy. From Mrs. G. Y. Henderson (Watermead Cattery, Eureka, California) Mrs. Fisher obtained three beautiful males, sired by Sintram's Valentine of Watermead ex Chez Minet Tika of Watermead, both predominantly Siamese Star in background. They brought the blue point and pastel factors into her strain. Her well-known chocolate stud, Ailourous, which fathered so large a number of the chocolate points of Central and Northern California, is descended from these two very diverse sources, line-bred to the chocolate carrying Watermead side, with Pymee Ma How as the distaff grand-dam. It is said of Ailourous that he used to ride all over San Francisco by taxi to keep his dates with his intended mates. Somehow this conjures up an image of a dapper-whiskered cat-of-the-world sitting casually on the back seat, languidly rubbing out a catnip cigarette or murmuring his intended's address to the driver in carefully modulated, pear-shaped meows.

Mrs. Fisher became a show judge in 1941, and is gratefully remembered (with Pauline Bearden Kelsey, Jess Adair, Alice Graydon Phillips and a few others) as a pioneer in the movement to give due consideration to type, in an era when Siamese were too often judged on color alone, especially by judges who were not breeders of Siamese. Ruth Fisher is an active show judge at the present time.

But Siamese cats in the West were being bred or imported not only by the well known connoisseurs of the breed whose names we remember.

They had also become a great fad with the novelty-seeking public, most of whom cared nothing for show standards, quality, or even purity of breed. They were evaluated by the general public, not according to their excellence as typical specimens, but too often by the fame of the personage who had owned them. Where once the Siamese had been in danger of dying out because of scarcity, it was now threatened with being adulterated out of its type by inundation of non-typical stock from the Orient. In those days it seemed as though every traveler to the Orient must bring home a pair of Siamese cats, no matter how totally innocent he might be of knowledge of the fine points of the breed.

Few bothered to take note of the fact that the cat that was being exported from the "Orient"-at-large in the thirties and following decades, was in too many instances, a virtually different breed of animal from the cat that had been brought out of Bangkok in the late nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth, where and when his purity of breed, and therefore his characteristic Siameseness had been protected by order of the king.

The non-royal cat had very little chance of being purebred, and he tended therefore to be non-typical in various of the aspects that characterize the breed, the weakest of all in those which had been emphasized by fifty years of selective breeding in the Occident, following two hundred years of supervision by the royal court of Bangkok. Strictly speaking it is scarcely possible to make descriptive generalizations about this motley cat population, since lack of conformity was perhaps their most consistently shared characteristic. However, they were easily distinguished from the typey and often fairly dark bodied, Eastern and English blooded cats of their time, by their coarser bone, paler, larger, fuller eyes, and shorter heads which tended to be thicker, not only from side to side, but in the dimension running perpendicularly from the surface of the face to the underside of the chin. They also very often tended to have paler body color. This seems contradictory at first glance, because it is a desired characteristic and one that has since been patiently selected into purebred strains. The great difference lies in the divergent sources from which this paleness of body was obtained.

When we consider that one of the ways in which the Siamese cat differs most uniquely from other breeds is in his characteristic color metamorphosis — that is, in his capacity to transform gradually from the snow-white of the newborn kitten to a deeply saturated color in adulthood — it is not surprising that non-purebred specimens should have been weak in this capacity to darken. On the other hand, the pale coat frequently found in strictly purebred cats of the present day, was achieved by generation after generation of painstaking selection of the less dark-bodied specimens. The seal point descendants of cats carrying the dilute factor (chocolate or lilac) were, of course, a fruitful source for this paleness of body color within the breed.

The pastel gene, or "dilution factor" as geneticists call it, is another characteristic which, like color metamorphosis, is indigenous to the Siamese, that is, it comes strictly from within the breed. For instance: it is for lack of this factor that solid brown coloring did not occur in any breed of cat,

until it was borrowed from the chocolate point Siamese. The dilute or pastel factor occurred relatively frequently, as rareties go at least, in the fine English and English-American strains of pure Bangkok origin, but it was exceedingly rare in the later, non-royal Siamese imports from the Orient, whose frequently found paleness of coat comes simply from being inadequately Siamese. It is therefore no inconsistency, no perverse jest of an unkind Fate that the non-royal Siamese often combined pale body color with poor type. The two belonged together, having come from the same hit-or-miss, non-Siamese sources.

It is unfortunate that in some cases breeders misguidedly tried to take short cuts to pale body color by mixing cats from such sources into their otherwise fine, purebred strains, so that in many instances, an excellent heredity is marred by the inclusion of some of these ancestors of doubtful purity of breed.

But not every cat which came to California direct from the Orient was non-typical. One cat comes to mind as being a particularly rare and brilliant exception, having had type that must have been nearly comparable to that of the best English cats. He was Tai Mau (born 1930), imported by Dr. Joseph Thompson of San Francisco, California. Tai Mau's superb type was still clearly discernable in his offspring and further descendants, in the early forties, and this is the more remarkable since his mate was the Burmese cat, Wong Mau — dome-headed, yellow-eyed, mackerel-shadowed, and sooty-toned. Tai Mau had earlier been given a Siamese mate, She Shan Mau, but she did not live long and was succeeded by the prolific Wong. It is one of the real tragedies of the breed that no descendants of this superb male remain that do not descend from Wong Mau.

It was Dr. Thompson's custom to present kittens to the many visitors who came to see his cats, which were a great curiosity at that time. His one requirement was that they must promise never to have the cat altered. There has probably never been a policy equal to this one for promoting the numerical increase of a strain. Present day Siamese descendants of these poetically typey, if muddy-eyed and grimey-coated, hybrids are now to be found in almost every state of the Union, and in Canada as well, so that only those who take the trouble to trace their cats' ancestries back to all their known sources can be sure of being free of out-cross blood.

Thus, Siamese in the West in the thirties and forties were from three distinct origins: (1) the Eastern-English-European lines from royal Bangkok; (2) the strains from later direct imports from the Orient-at-large, including Siam; (3) the Siamese-Burmese hybrids emanating from San Francisco.

Some of the California breeders have carefully and successfully bred "up" from the group from the Orient, improving type by adding Eastern stock. Some have freely used all three sources, and out of this melting pot they have created many beautiful specimens which have attested to their breeders' skill. Still others have cleaved rigorously to the pure royal Bangkok stock, mainly of English or Eastern origin, and they too have achieved winning strains, as well as helping significantly assure that the purebred Siamese will not be lost to posterity.

To Be Concluded.