

# The Incomparable Domestic Shorthair

by Mrs. Kay McQuillen\*



**T**HERE ARE NO authentic facts as to just when the cat appeared on this earth. Legend tells us that cats were created at the wish of Noah for inclusion in the Ark. Apparently the rodent was known at that time, and the cat was necessary to protect the Ark's food stores. Unfortunately these legends don't tell us the type of cat included, but one might assume that it was a shorthair.

Our first real knowledge of the domesticated cat comes from the earliest history of Egypt, about 4000 years ago. Findings of archeologists indicate that the pet cat of the ancient Egyptians was probably a descendent of the Kaffir cat, a grayish-brown, medium-sized wildcat that roamed southern Africa. Both the Kaffir cat and the cat depicted in early Egyptian pictures have markings very similar to today's domestic tabby cat. It is believed that the Phoenician traders took the Egyptian cat to the continent of Europe on their ships about 900 B.C., and that the cat then traveled on into England with the Roman invaders. This Roman cat is thought to have bred with a small wildcat known to have been in the British Isles in those days, the resulting breed being a medium-sized cat, yellowish-gray in ground color, with dark brown or black wavy stripes on the body and legs and with dark rings on the tail.

There is no definite indication that there were any domesticated members of the cat family on this continent before the Pilgrims landed. However, there is a report that there was a "shorthaired cat

**Dbl. Ch. Springbrook  
Illimani**



\*Mrs. McQuillen is a CFA judge, well known for her work with the Domestic Short Hair. Other information about her will be found in the judges section Ed

of many colors, on the Mayflower (probably a tortie and white) who later is said to have given birth to a litter of kittens of various colors, some with tabby markings.



Gr. Ch. Gray Horse Farm Gentleman

Today the Domestic Shorthair is, numerically at least, the most popular of all breeds. If a door-to-door census were taken, we would probably find the majority of the cats found would be the familiar, strong, dependable, intelligent Domestic Shorthairs. The term "Domestic" has been chosen for this breed in this country to replace the older "alley cat" or "barn cat" because this cat truly fits the dictionary definition of "domestic" . . . "tame, devoted to home duties, pertaining to the household or family." The Domestic today is easy-going, faithful, most affectionate and even-tempered, active and playful, perceptive, and easily trained. It is a hearty breed, with great physical endurance and as a rule is a good eater and not fussy about diet. The Domestic cat has changed very little in form, although considerably in coat, as the years have passed. They are still a working cat, however, and able to fend for themselves when necessary, being robust, muscular, and alert.

Although the first cat show held in England was in 1871, the first record that I have found of specific interest in the Domestic Shorthair (or the British Domestic as it is called there) was the formation of the Shorthaired Cat Society in 1901 by Mr. G. Boulton, which encouraged breeding and showing of the shorthaired domestic cat, dividing them into three sections: the self (or solid) color, the broken color, and other varieties. In this country the earliest recorded cat show was in Chicago in 1899. Not having access to the records of that show, I do not know if there were any Domestic Shorthairs shown at that time. In the earliest CFA Studbook that I have (Volume IV, published in 1915) there are eight shorthaired cats registered. Some had backgrounds given and some did not. There were three female Silver Tabbies, one male Silver Tabby, one male Smoke, one female White with blue eyes, one Blue male, and one not defined.

As time went on, more breeders became interested in breeding and showing the Domestic, but they were very few in number. It took long and heartbreaking years to produce the show-type Domestic, and then to educate the public to value these animals. The public was not interested at first in paying for a breed that they felt could be found on any streetcorner. As new breeders entered the fancy and breeders of the Longhairs added the Domestic to their catteries, we all worked to convince the public that the Domestic with careful, selective breeding behind it is superior to the free-running alley cat. It takes many generations to establish a bloodline and to insure



Giant and Swirl  
Tide

a "pure-breeding" cat—one that will produce true to its type and pattern, and this is just as true with the Domestic Shorthairs as it is with the Persians and the Foreign Shorthairs.

I recall that when I entered the fancy in 1938 there were still very few Domestic cats shown; there was little interest in them, and as a result not all the colors and patterns that we have today were available for breeding purposes. We often hear it declared that there are better cats running loose than at the shows. This is true

in many cases, for the aim of the Domestic breeder has been to perfect the basic Domestic cat with the certified pedigree so that it will be a more satisfactory cat, both for show and as a pet.

Through the years, while we have been developing this breed, many Domestic cats have been shown as listed cats, without particulars, and many of these cats of unknown lineage have won over the pedigreed cats in the shows. This has been a source of unhappiness to the dedicated Domestic breeder, as much time and money have gone into the development of the breed to show standards, only to have it apparently wasted when the stray cat wins in the shows. Associations have been petitioned at various times, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, to bar these unpedigreed Domestic cats from the show rings and to prohibit them from registration. However, the contention has been made that not enough bloodlines exist today in enough different colors and patterns to allow a good breeding program for all the interested breeders. Also some believe that allowing people to show their unpedigreed domestic cats will help build a wider interest in the breed. We must not lose sight of the fact that our Domestic show cats of today came from cats without back-

grounds, and it is through selective breeding that we have developed all the various colors and patterns that are so popular today. Some breeders feel that the Domestic breeding has not advanced enough yet to bar good quality Domestic cats whose only fault may be a lack of known parentage, and that we need these cats for breeding purposes if they meet our standards in every other way.

It has only been within the past ten to fifteen years that we have seen fairly large classes of Domestic cats in our shows, and the development of specialty clubs for the domestic breeder is also



Top cat is Ch. and Prem. Miss Hogan, blue domestic female; blue cat (lower left) is Ch. Miss Hogan's Storm Bumm, blue domestic male; lower right is Ch. Miss Hogan's Shmo-Bo, smoke domestic male.

fairly recent. I myself can recall not too many years back that when we Domestic breeders paid our entry and arrived at a show, we often found no cages available, and no trophies or rosettes offered in the Domestic classes. The Domestics were only tolerated as extra points for the other cats. This situation has been changing rapidly though, and today the Domestic cat is coming to be recognized as a vital part of the show world.

There is still much to be done. For instance, our standard in CFA should have definite points assigned to the different parts of the standard. Also we need drawings or pictures in color of cats that are as close as possible to the standard, so that the judges, the novice breeders, and the public can better understand what the various terms mean that are used in the standard. Today the CFA show standard for the Domestic calls for the same coat and eye colors as the Longhair standard, while some other associations permit a wider variety of color and pattern in the Domestic standard.

In the earliest shows the most common Domestic entries were the Whites with various eye colors, the Blacks, the Torties and Calicos, the Brown Tabby, and the Silver Tabby. Occasionally there was a Masked Silver, which is no longer seen, and sometimes a rare unmarked Cream, a solid Red, a Smoke, or a Shaded or Chinchilla Silver. Even today some of these are rarely seen, and the Shaded and Chinchilla are still not plentiful. Some experimental breeding has been done, crossing to the Longhair and to the Aby, but it will take time to perfect the color and tipping and rebuild the pedigree to eliminate this hybrid background.

One of the earliest breeders in Silvers, and one of the real pioneers in breeding Domestics, was Mrs. C. F. Kunkler of Columbus, Ohio. Mrs. Kunkler has worked with the Silvers since 1940 when she and Nell Stewart pioneered in breeding this color. The first pair was born March 14, 1940. According to the registration the pair came from a blue-and-white female named Arlington Tippy and a white male named Arlington Twinkle. Mrs. Kunkler outcrossed to blacks, to blues, and to whites. Finding the black outcross the most satisfactory for her purposes, she then bred back to the silver line. She followed this program for many generations, finally establishing a beautiful line of Chins and Shaded Silvers, exemplified by her Ch. Illimani (pictured).

One of the biggest problems in this particular breeding is the



Gr. Ch. Toby II of Scioto

persistence of the tabby markings, usually showing up as bars on the forelegs or rings on the tail — a fault that is extremely difficult to eliminate. We must remember, though, that the original cats had these markings, and there are thousands of generations of tabby-marked cats behind our non-tabby show cats today, so we cannot expect perfect results right away.

The Silver Tabby in the past five years has become extremely popular and we see large entries in this class in today's shows. The public has taken to them, which has encouraged the breeders. The Brown Tabby was at one time quite popular, but now the Silver Tabby has overtaken it in popularity, probably because of the more striking markings. However, we still find that the Brown Tabby generally has the better type of the two.

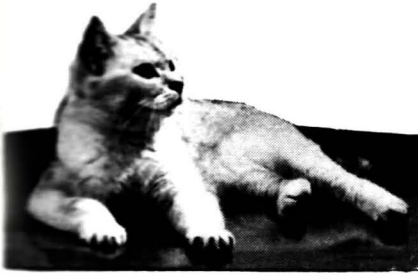
The early breeders of the Silver Tabby found that outcrosses were needed to strengthen the type, and black was introduced into the lines, as well as smoke. However in many cases this darkened the coat too much, as did blue when it was used. Outcrosses to white were tried to eliminate the darker coat, but often the resulting ground color was white instead of silver, or the tipping was lost. Some said that the smoke with a white undercoat would help. We are still working hard to get the perfect bulls-eye, the perfect spinals, the perfect M on the forehead, and we still need to work to eliminate the white feet, lack of tipping, locketts, or too-white throat area. Crosses to the Brown or Red Tabby often brought a yellow or brown tinge to the color while helping to improve the pattern and type. This cross brought an eye-color problem, though, that still needs much work. In our breeding we want to perfect the striking tabby markings, "clearly defined and broad markings, not pencil-thin stripes."

The Smoke Domestic has never been extremely common, as it has not bred true in the past. One or two would crop up at the various shows and often the owners would not know they had a Smoke until they were told to look down through the coat to the undercoat. As a judge I rarely handled a Smoke Domestic, and it was quite an occasion when we had a really good one at a show.

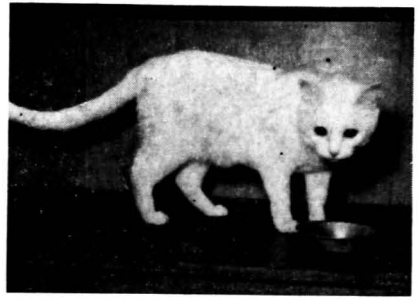
One of the rarest solid colors both in the past and today is the solid Cream. It is very

**Aztec, in characteristic poses, showing back markings and front-side view.**





R.M. Quad. Ch. Livingston's Shadi Ladi of Pallydy. All So. and All-American Shaded Silver Domestic Female, '63.



Silver Quest Morning Star

hard to breed the mackerel markings out, and it requires more work than many are willing to give it. The most perfect Creams in color that I have ever seen were shown by Mrs. V. Blaurock in Cincinnati, although they lacked the type that is expected today.

I cannot begin to list all the breeders who pioneered in the development of the Domestic or who have carried on their work, nor could I list all the outstanding show cats, but I will mention some that I especially remember for one reason or another. High on my list would be Aztec (pictured), one of the first top Silver Tabbies, who appears in many of today's pedigrees. Aztec was owned by Dr. and Mrs. Charles Foulk of Columbus, Ohio. Another outstanding early-day Silver Tabby was Silver Boy Brutus, bred in early 1940, and owned by one of our pioneer breeders, Mrs. Helen M. Picciano of New York. Another early breeder in this color was Mrs. Frank Freudenthal of Connecticut, and her Benmost Bore Sheila was a top show winner. Another pioneer was Dr. Francis McCracken, who bred and exhibited Domestic cats 25 years ago, and cats coming from her Torchlight Cattery, the Cobourg cats of Roy Hilyers', and the cats of Grace Hinchcliffe of Ontario are all behind many of today's top show winners.

Among the more recent outstanding Silver Tabbies I would include my own Gr. Ch. Gray Horse Farm's Gentleman, bred by Whitney Abt, and his daughter Silver Quest Swirl Tide. There is the well-known Gr. Ch. Lavender Silver Pattern, bred by Elsie Hydon, and Gr. Ch. Ormai Babette II of Aberdeen, bred by Jeanette Pratt and owned by Mrs. H. M. Cole. The Shawnee Cattery has come up with some beautiful Silver Tabbies in Gr. Ch. Shawnee Startler and Gr. Ch. Shawnee Marksman. Marksman was sired by my Gentleman, as was Shawnee Jentle Spark. Going further west, there is Navajo's Moonlight Gambler, bred by Mrs. E. B. Myrick of Phoenix, and Gr. Ch. Ramayana Jenna of Gray Horse Farms, bred by Mrs. J. D. Elliott of Austin, Texas, and owned by Mrs. Abt.

One of the pioneers in Red Tabbies was Mrs. Stanley Gibson in the East. Mrs. Rose Cooper's magnificent Eric The Red is well-remembered, as is his son Gr. Ch. Solon Red Emburr, bred in 1957

by Mrs. Ernest Miller. Another outstanding Red Tabby was Dr. Nancy Riser's Gr. Ch. Vikiri Red Kelley.



R.M. Gr. Ch. Gray Horse Farm Ram-Jet

Among the Brown Tabbies, one of the best was from California, Mrs. Ralph McDonald's female Barefoot Contessa. In the males, I especially remember Flo-Mar Firecracker, who was known for the fact that he had no ticking in his ground-coat. Another lovely Brown Tabby was Liz Kollmorgen Bailey's Cool Morning Sequin, who had excellent type and needed only a slightly more tawny ground-color.

As I mentioned, Smokes of outstanding quality have been few, but among the best I would place Dr. and Mrs. H. E. Billig's "Billig's Patina" who placed in the national ratings from 1951 through 1958—quite a record. Mrs. Bailey's Cool Morning Smokie Joe was an outstanding male Smoke.

Mrs. John Hunter pioneered in the Whites, one of her early successes being Rockridge White Hunter, a blue-eyed white. In the 40's Mrs. Bryan Shine's blue-eyed Mystery Marvel swept the shows, and in the 1950-1951 season Mrs. Hoag's blue-eyed Nor-Mont Angelique became one of the earliest domestic CFA Grand Champions. One of the odd-eyed whites that stands out is Shawnee Narcissus, and I am proud of Narcissus' copper-eyed offspring, Silver Quest Morning Star, who was sired by Silver Quest Vagabond King, a copper-eyed white known for his huge build and well-developed muscle.

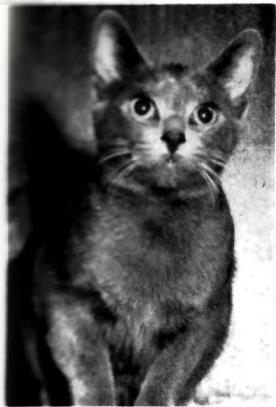
Mrs. Lee Carnahan of Norfolk, Virginia, was one of the pioneers in Blue breeding, and her Gr. Ch. Miss Hogan was one of the best. Among the more recent good Blues I would put Gr. Ch. Solon's Blue Piper, bred by Mrs. Ernest Miller and owned by Mrs. Bailey. In the South, one of the consistent show winners has been the blue female Clover Ridge Ivette (see picture), bred and shown by Mrs. Charles Beyer of Houston.

There have been many outstanding Blacks, and it is especially hard to single out just a few. Mildred Avery was one of the early breeders in this color. More recently we have seen Mrs. Perlie McKnight's Gr. Ch. McKnight's Tar Baby become a consistent show winner, as has the equally outstanding Gr. Ch. Karabee Black Knight, bred by the Bjerkeng's of Minneapolis. In the East there have been two very good females, Gr. Ch. Ebony Queen of Nor-Mont and Gr. Ch. Barlyn's Ebony Duchess of Nor-Mont.

In the Torties there are two especially that stand out: Gr. Ch. Karabee Tiger Lilly, owned by David Bjerkeng, and Mrs. D. R. Blaney's Gr. Ch. Toby II of Scioto, (see picture).

I know there are many more outstanding cats and breeders that

I should mention, but these serve to show the great progress that has been made in Domestic breeding. Breeders starting today have



**Clover Ridge Ivette**

the advantage of many wonderful bloodlines to work with, but there is still much to be done. As time goes on there will be less of a problem of the so-called "alley cat" being any real competition for the purebred Domestic, for more and more the free-running Domestic is breeding with the free-running Foreign Shorthair, and the result is a cat far removed from the original Domestic that we want to preserve, and this will make it easier to explain to the public the advantages of the purebred Domestic. It gives us, however, a great responsibility to protect and pass on the wonderful characteristics of our present show-type Domestics—the sturdy body, the strength, the good muscle—and at the same

time to improve the type, the coat and the markings. We must be very careful not to allow the Domestic to become a hothouse variety; we don't want to make a weakling out of our strongest breed!

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