

They Walked With The Silver Kings

by Mell Russell



Mrs. Russell

"I AM THE CAT who walks by himself" wrote Kipling, over sixty years ago: "And all places are alike to me."

That's just once Mister Kipling got in over his head, and proved he knew nothing about cats, and probably didn't even like cats! For no cat, of his own choice, walks by himself: all crave human companionship, and all cats love their homes. They can die of homesickness, and sometimes do.

Assuredly, none of the sparkling Silver Kings who has paced across our show benches for the past half century has walked by himself. Always, by his side, has walked a proud owner—breeder—friend—ha! devoted slave! Usually a woman.

Three of these pioneer breeders who have helped to develop some of the finest Silvers in America, have stepped out of the past to tell us of their struggles and triumphs which have given us a priceless heritage—the foundation for our beautiful Silvers of today. They tell of the past, as they recall it; step briefly into a past some of the older breeders of today can recall. They do not venture into the immediate past, nor the present. That is another story.

These are just a few personal memories—glimpses into the past; supplemented by reference to yellowed old pedigrees in my notes, and show catalogs and cat magazines of those days. The telling of it all would fill volumes but the enthusiasm, and the devotion to this unique class of long-hairs; nothing is missing there.

Mrs. Alfred Townsend, (Bonnie Silvers) began breeding Silvers about forty years ago, when she was living in Ardsley, New York. She owned, and bred some of the most famous, first on the Atlantic coast, later on the Pacific coast. She never bred any other color.

"Oh it was not easy in those early days of Silver breeding," she says. "There were so few cats, and we desperately needed new blood and outcrosses. We were learning, really pioneering. Sometimes a fine Silver was imported from England, but that was expensive; we got a few from the Middle East; we got them wherever we could, and treasured them all. We worked hard."

been recognized, and the standard calls for a cat that appears blue, with bluish-white undercoat and ruff; other the same qualifications as the black Smoke Miss Hurd was developing.

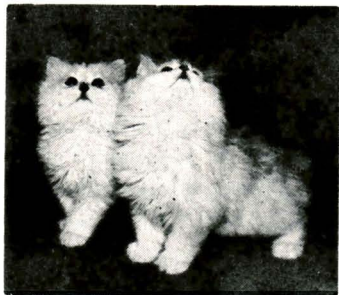


Gr. Ch. Co-Mc's Silver Cherub, AA
1964 Chinchilla Female. Mrs. C. H.
Coughlin, breeder owner.

In far-away Osaka, Japan, where one of the most active CFA clubs is now operating, there is great enthusiasm about the Silvers.

The two little Silver girls pictured below are the first Silver kittens born in Japan. Their mother, Las Montanas Mayflower, was sent to Mr. Takashi Takeda in 1963, bred to Duncanshire D'Argent, and the kittens were born in Osaka. Mr. Takeda is the founder, and the present Secretary of the Japan Cat Fanciers, CFA. The photography is by Mr. Takeda.

Down through the years, even for half a century, some of these breeders have walked, with their Silver Kings padding along beside them on silent, fur-stocked feet. They have given us a priceless heritage. May we ever guard and treasure it.



Two little American Japanese
girls. (Duncanshire D'Argent,
Las Montanas Mayflower)

My sources of information:

Mrs. Alfred Townsend, (Bonnie Silvers)

Miss Catherine Hurd (Metichiwan Smokes)

Mrs. Arthur Smith (Citrus Ridge Silvers)

who graciously permitted me to interview and ghost-write their experiences;

Mrs. Ethel Maule (Phyatak Siamese), who loaned me her collection of show catalogs and cat magazines, going back into the early 1930's.

Files of ancient pedigrees, my own and others, many very old. Old cuts and photographs of early-day Silvers.

Many of the finest of early day breeders were interested in Silvers. Mrs. Hobbs with her Winter stock; Miss Paine's Rosederes; Miss Hurd was breeding Smokes in New York; Miss Gilbert's Wahoos; the Pequotettes, with Imp. Dante of Allington back of them; the Rockmoors; the magnificent Clarements who went everywhere, always winning; the Southern (Southern Silver Lion was the sire of the famous Ch. Silver Lion of Rosewood in California;) Mrs. Mood and her typey Delphis; Zeises and his Corsos; the Minnesotas; Miss Barlow's typey Kildares with the beautiful eye color in Washington, and others there in the far Northwest; Mrs. Stewart was breeding beautiful Silvers in Arlington, Va. She later bought Imp. Leo of Allington from a West Coast importer and added that line; one went to Flagstone, and a note on his pedigree says Mrs. Shy of Shy's Castle got another of his sons; and in the Deep South Mrs. Arthur Smith was coming to the front with her Citrus Ridge. There were many others, of course; but you will find most of these in your old pedigrees if you can go back far enough.



Ch Rosedere of Beau Clair of Bonnie Silvers

Ours was a busy household. Our three boys were very young; I was always running around to cat shows, buying the best I could find, breeding and selling. Mr. Townsend, who is a horticulturalist, was winning his trophies in flower shows, breeding Shelties, a kind of sheep dog they favor in his native Scotland, and showing and sometimes judging in the great Madison Square Garden shows. When he looked at one of my cats and told me it was good, that cat proved to be good; if he saw faults, that ended the matter. He always knew type.

In about 1924, Miss Paine brought down two handsome Silver males from Canada; she named them Rosedere Don Clair, and Rosedere Beau Clair. Mrs. Steward bought Rosedere Don Clair for her Arlington cattery, and I bought Rosedere Beau Clair. He was really the foundation of my Bonnie Silvers. He sired many beautiful kittens for me, and I always sold my best. He sired Bonnie Maid O'The Mist; I sold her to Miss Maude Lantry, then a young and popular actress on the New York stage. Miss Lantry showed Bonny Maid everywhere; she became a champion, and was known all over the East. He also sired Bonnie Jean of Ardsley, equally beautiful and famous. Bonnie Jean was a CFF Grand Champion. I have a cut of Beau Clair, so you can see his beauty. He was born about 1923, in Canada.

Another of my beautiful studs was Bonnie Pride O'The Silvers. He was born May 16, 1936. His sire was Ch. Pequosette Dante, son of Imp. Dante of Allington; his dam, Ch. Idalia of Pequosette, with Pequosettes, Winters, Claremonts, Winterdeens and Wedgewoods in her pedigree.

In 1947 we moved to Altadena, California. I had sent Bonnie Jersey Gem and her five tiny babies on ahead to Mrs. Hazlett of Beverly-Serrano, in Hollywood. I brought My Honey Boy of Bonnie Silvers with me. These two cats carried all my old, famous lines. Bonnie Jersey Gem, 18 years old this past May 3rd, now sleeps in the shady spots in the yard on hot days, hunts the sunny spots on cool days, and dreams of those many, beautiful, cuddly babies she nursed in the past.

Mrs. Hazlett's Beverly-Serrano cattery, and Mrs. Walton's Starlight, were the ruling catteries in Hollywood in those days. Mrs. Hazlett had built up her line from what she considered the best of the local cats, and there were some expert old breeders; Miss Workman had the Hill-andales. They were beautiful; Hiss Hershberger had Bamtam Ranch, more good ones; Mrs. McCoy had the Garlands, and she had bred in and owned some of the Kildares with their fine head type and deep eye color. Mrs. Van Zele, Casa Contenta, knew how to breed, and hers were right; the Rosewoods with their beautiful coats and size and good eye color were spectacular, but had no head type. Mrs. Walton's Star-

lights of course carried all the fine old Eastern lines, they had about everything except eye color, and she got that later from her Allington line and some Kildares and Hillandales.

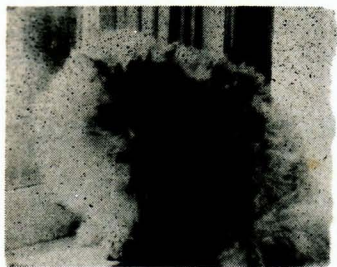
There were many beginning to breed Silvers at that time; and I saw some muddy coats, bars, and other faults we had either never had, or had bred out. It takes an expert to breed Silvers; the others soon give up, and many of them did.



Ch. Wee Heather Midget.
(Ch. Bonnie Career Boy of Shasta
Olah Laurie of Wee Heather)
Born 1959.

Bonnie Silvers, and got Ch. Bonnie Prince Charlie; Charlie's son, Bonnie Career Boy, went to Shasta, became a Champion, and sired among others, Wee Heather Midget, now on his way to Grand Championship. Many others, of course. We always seem to follow the careers of our males; the females are equally as important, perhaps more important.

Now, like Gem, I'm resting in the sun—or in the shade. I go to the cat shows and see the beautiful, sparkling Silvers, and marvel at their perfection, their grooming, their size and bone. Of course they are larger and heavier—how could they help being, with all those vitamins, and scientific feeding? No more muddy coats, no bars, no imperfect tipping or shading. Some things I regret and fear—the injudicious inbreeding for the sake of “setting type”, or getting exaggerated type quickly for exhibition, and wins. This can quickly lead to trouble, and the destruction of a cattery. And it is not necessary any more. The type has been developed. The Silvers at best are limited as to where they can be bred, and we must not destroy any. They are too beautiful. I look at them in all their sparkling glory, and I remember my loved ones, now all gone, and I want to cry. I do cry.



Ch. Rob Roy Captain
of Claremont

Ch. Rob Roy, Captain of Claremont, was probably the greatest of the Claremonts, who were famous in the 1920's and 30's. Miss Etta Hodnette of Denver owned Ch. Rob Roy and others of the Claremonts, bred and showed them extensively at that time. They finished their days in partial retirement in Denver. A note on the back of this picture, given me by Miss Hodnette says he was a beautiful Shaded, sweet and gentle. That in 1926, he went Best in Show over 18 Champions, in Detroit. He was a consistent winner.

January 20th and 21st, 1933, The California Cat Club benched its first championship show, on Sunset Blvd. Hollywood. There were 126 entries, and of that number, 45 were in the Chinchilla and Shaded classes. They transferred them back and forth so many times, the two classes cannot be listed separately; there were 7 Silver Tabby's and 5 Smokes, total, 57. Best Cat in Show, (champions not competing) Prince Edward, Chin. Novice, owner Mrs. John Roberts (of Four Oaks?) BOX Bonnie Lassie of Rosewood, Chin. owner, Mrs. Wood; Best Champion, Ch. Starlight Heart Bandit, Shaded, Mrs. Walton owner; BOX Ch. Wahoo Favors of DelNorte, Chin. owner Mrs. Williams.

A few carried cattery names: Starlight, Butterfield, Red Grange, Silver Eyes, Rosewood, Del Norte, Moonbeam. Mrs. Hazlett showed a few kittens but had no cattery name. Birth dates were not given, neither were the names of sires and dams listed.

It was a 4-point CFA show, the first, I believe, in California, but by no means the first cat show. The older associations had benched earlier shows. Mrs. F. H. Craver was the judge.

I wonder whatever happened to Prince Edward, Novice Best in Show? He appeared a few times in later shows, but I cannot find him in any of my old pedigrees.

But Mrs. Butterfield's Dolly Varden, who didn't even get a ribbon in the Shaded Novice class, has gone down in history. Bred to Peke of Butterfield, they produced a wonderful female named "Scotia." Scotia, bred back to her sire, Peke of Butterfield, was the mother of Son of Scotia; (a beautiful enlargement of his photo hangs in a famous photographer's studio in Santa Monica; a beautiful cat!) Son of Scotia bred Susabeth, and sired Son of Scotia II, and Susabeth was the daughter of Urmia Capri, whose sire was Son of Scotia. There is an example of early-day line-breeding and inbreeding, perhaps experimental, perhaps just using the best at hand. At any rate, this strain appears in some of

the most famous Silvers of the West Coast, the Northwest and the Southwest, even today . . . Dolly Varden . . . a little Novice loser in her first CFA show! So you never can tell.

In the May, 1933 Pacific Cat Review, Mrs. Eva T. Harris (Barbe Bleue blacks and blues), writing of Persian cats says that in the 1916 cat show at the San Diego Exposition there were seventy-three so-called Shaded silvers. And that Mrs. Lola Besse who judged, remarked the number and said: "The Shaded Silver is too beautiful to smear up with off color breeding." Mrs. Harris further says: "Know your Silvers and see to it that Pedigrees show no mixture of colors lest your choicest baby kit appears with a great or small tawny smudge on the permanent coat, thus becoming an outcast."

When I moved from Denver to California in 1946, with my Las Montanas Silvers, many cats were being shown that influenced later history. Starlight Heart Bandit, the first, was dead. He was from Wedgewoods, Gaylands, back into the Minnesotas and Winters. Ch. Starlight Heart Bandit II, his son, carried Hillandales, Lariston, Vagabond Prince, etc. Back of:

Starlight Sir Lee and Starlight Lady Lea, were—

Imp Leo of Allington x Starlight Silver Echo;

Ch. Chiquita Linda and Caprice of Laguna, were—

Imp. Leo of Allington x Ch. Lady Cozette (of Beverly-Serrano, later sold to Miss Gilbert and registered as Wahoo Lady Cozette.)

Gr. Ch. Duffy of Beverly-Serrano was—

Ch. Starlight Bandit II x Ch. Chiquita Linda

Gr. Ch. Michael of Beverly-Serrano, bred by Mabel Fisher (later registered Angelus) was—

Gr. Ch. Duffy of Beverly-Serrano x Mitzi of Beverly-Serrano;

Gr. Ch. Mistress Mary of Lanny Lei was—

Gr. Ch. Michael of Beverly-Serrano x Starlight Souvenir Cookie;

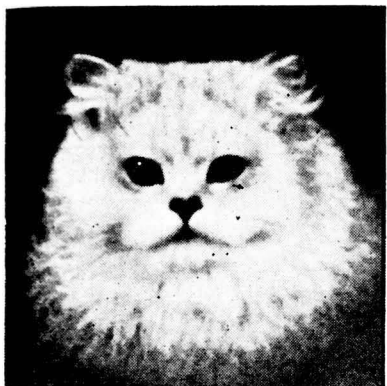
Gr. Ch. Calure Gala of Chatami was—

Gr. Ch. Skyland Arcturus x Gr. Ch. Mistress Mary of Lanny Lei. Gala has given the great Chatami cattery of the Northwest a procession of beautiful champions and grand champions through the years. A sister of Gala is owned by Skyland; a direct line into the famous Scotias. Gr. Ch. Skyland Diana was—

Ronny of Silver Gables x Alcyone of Skyland. Ronny, son of Starlight Sir Lee x Chi Chi of Silver Gables; he was one of the founders of Las Montanas Cattery.

Eva McCoy's (Garland) Irisheen went back through Adamson's Roblyn to Kildares, Minnesotas, Claremonts; her Chandra was mostly from Rosewoods, Buena Vista, and cats with no cattery names listed. The Kildares, Claremonts and Winters gave these cats their excellence.

A few you will recall easily because they went on to championships and grand championships; of course there were many more. Some of their finest were never even shown.



Ch. Kennekennick de
Las Montanas

Mrs. Van Zele bred her Casa Contenta Donna Isabel to Ch. Kinnikinnick de Las Montanas, and their daughter, Casa Contenta Caprice, went to Mrs. Lovett (Marleon) in New Jersey, became a Grand Champion and reigned supreme for many years at Marleon.

At the time of the final illness and death of Mrs. Wood, the Rosewoods, then old, were given to Mrs. Van Zele, and ended their days in luxurious retirement at Casa Contenta.

Through the Starlights, the Bonnie Silvers, and the Garlands, the West Coast Silvers got their best infusions of new blood. Leo of Allington, imported by Mrs. Hammond was a valuable addition. Besides the two breedings to Beverly-Serrano and Starlight, he did breed at least one litter of kittens for Mrs. Hammond. I can find no record of these, however.

While the Silvers were rising to their peak in the East, Mrs. Arthur Smith at her Citrus Ridge Cattery in Miami, was beginning to give more and more of her interest to them. She began breeding in 1928, and has bred all colors.

In 1936 she registered her cattery in CFA and is now one of the oldest charter members still active in Miami's club. She says:

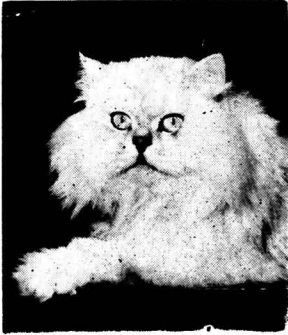
"I bought the best I could, locally, with Silver Gates, Winter, Starlight, Pequosette, Rockmoor, Belvedere and Vanity Fair in the background. I never owned any imported lines, my cats were all American bred; my first, from Mrs. Doucet who was showing nothing but Silvers in the early 1930's.

"I always sold my best. Mrs. Pauline Filkins, of Audubon, N. J. praised my cats highly and made many All Eastern wins with them. Mrs. Ralph Mabie had two of mine. Her Citrus Ridge Valentine II was a premier champion.

"Many people criticized me for selling my Citrus Ridge Tres Jur Sir Echo, but I know Mrs. Kisler could give him a chance I could not give him myself. She made a wonderful record with him, and his beautiful kittens have gone all over the United States. He was born in 1951, and died in 1962.

"My Citrus Ridge Perki Pasha lived but four short years, but made a wonderful record. He was All American Shaded in 1956, while Sir Echo only got honorable mention also All Southern in 1956 and 1957.

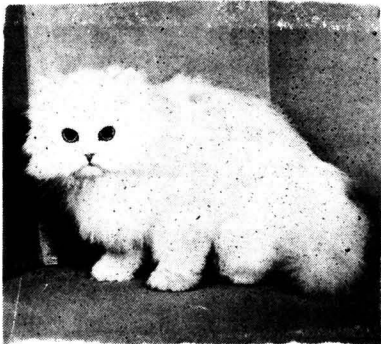
"In April of this year, I sent my Margate Softon of Citrus Ridge, a beautiful young Silver male, to Amsterdam, Holland, along with all his ribbons and trophies. I hope he will help the European breeders, and am looking forward to news about him.



Ch Citrus Ridge
Pericles

In my early days of breeding I was told by some judges that I could not go on improving; I had the best and there was no place to go. Well, I did not let that stop me, and when later Mr. Ghyst of Los Angeles sent me a lovely Chinchilla girl, "Cloette of Beverly-Serrano", I again began getting lovely, typey kittens. Mated to my dear old Citrus Ridge Pericles, I got many beautiful kittens. I have a wonderful old queen from this breeding—Ch. Citrus Ridge Per-Ette. She will be 14 in July, and by that time will have a litter of babies running around here. Pericles, who was shaded, but turned chinchilla as he grew older, was a wonderful old boy. He was 14 when he died."

In the Southwest, Mrs. Harry Garrison, Gar-Le Cattery, has been breeding Silvers for many years. She has had the best from Flagstone, Citrus Ridge, and many others. Her beautiful kittens go out all over the South and Southwest, every year. Meanwhile, she has been Regional Vice President, president of local clubs, and had a hand in managing the spectacular CFA cat shows in Houston, where all the great names in Catdom of the Deep South, the Southeast and West and Southwest meet to battle it out for their wins, every year. Her Gar-Le Adoree went to the rising Co-Mc Cattery. Mrs. Coughlin, and Adoree's daughter,



Las Montanas Caress of Gar-Le
as a kitten

Cherub, began winning as Best Kitten at 4 months, is now a Grand Champion, and a consistent winner. Las Montanas Caress of Gar-Le, has those unique "Scotias" of the West Coast on both sides of her pedigree. She goes out on the show circuits until it is breeding time, then she stays home and dutifully raises her little family of beautiful babies. "Ribbons and trophies are nice," she says, "but a nest of tiny speckledy, salt-and-pepper

babies all piled on top of each other in a little mound of sleepiness are nicer." Still she has several championships, and one grand. Gr. Ch. Las Montanas Silver Thistle of Gar-Le is the beloved patriarch of Gar-Le Cattery.

The Smokes, who belong in the Silver Division, have always been a mystery to many uninformed people. How do they get that dark top coat, white undercoat and ruff? Those copper eyes in a cat supposed to be related to the Silvers?

Miss Catherine Hurd who began developing the black Smokes in 1929, in New York, can tell us about her early experiences.

"When I began breeding Smokes in 1929, there was little at that time to work with in the East, and I found them a most interesting challenge. My first Smoke came from a shaded silver "Winter" male and a blue dam; she had the sweet little round head and face most of my Metichiwam Smokes carried throughout, but otherwise was not particularly outstanding. The leading Smokes at that time were the Kimkas of the Middle West. I purchased Ch. Kimka Kelita, Smoke female from Mrs. Barde, and then began to produce good Smokes. Type and eye color needed to be improved, and I did this by breeding in some good blue blood. This, however, gave the ruff and undercoat quite a "muddy" color, but always the cobby type. As the original eye color of the Smokes was green, the deep copper eyes of the blues helped there. I found that if color-bred Smoke were bred to color-bred Smoke for generation after generation, the eyes would revert to green.

"I experimented with introducing blacks, and also whites, very successfully. After establishing eye color and cobby type, my next problem was getting back the clear white undercoat and ruff. And it still is a problem. Outstanding Smokes I bred were Ch. Nyrnple Errant, Ch. Metichiwam Colette, Ch. Dubarry, Ch. Tuerlee, Ch. Xanadin (now 10 years old) Smoke Signal, Tamberlane, and Ch. Prince Albert. A favorite of mine was a Smoke bred by the Dunonin Cattery which I purchased from Mrs. Miles. Nearly all of these trace back directly to probably the greatest of them all, Conqueror Tamberlane.

"I have always been a great admirer of Silvers, and the Bonnie Silvers and Winter stock were my favorites. I purchased Bonnie Wee Cheet (shaded) of Mrs. Townsend many, many years ago. She had the loveliest head and eyes.

"I think the new Smoke breeders should follow the Smoke standard of CFA and CFF. I note several of the judges giving winners to grayish-white undercoats and even grey top coats with tabby markings. The top coat should be black, unmarked, and the undercoat and ruff, clear white."

Since these notes were written by Miss Hurd, the Blue Smoke has

Year Book, 1964