

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Conversation With Matil Rotter

I was born in a small farming community in Heron Lake, Minnesota on a farm my grandparents homesteaded in the very early years.

You asked me when I first wanted to own cats! I guess I'd have to say — the day I was born! Anyway, my mother tells me, the first

word I ever said was 'kitty'! Being raised on a farm, there were always cats around and I loved them. When Cyril and I were married in 1930, we took a pair of 'barn kittens' with us to our apartment in Chicago, Illinois, where my husband was employed with the Illinois Steel Company as a young electrical engineer, having just graduated from college with a B.A. degree in electrical engineering. Depression years came and in 1933 we moved back to Minneapolis. We purchased a small home and someone gave me a long haired cat and that was it. I purchased a purebred persian kitten from Mrs. T. R. James of Minneapolis paying \$10.00 for her. I really thought I had a winner for, after all, I had paid \$10.00 for her! I of course put her in our local cat show and received a blue ribbon



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for which I was most pleased, but then, I thought, I should have had 'Best Kitten' in show! I asked Mrs. James what was wrong with my lovely little black persian kitten. She said, "Well, she could be a little better all over!" So — I sent to the Barbe Bleue Cattery in Van Nuys, California and purchased a bred black Persian female — I couldn't get ahead fast enough. I was completely "hooked" on pedigree cats, cats having always been a part of my life.

I'm a housewife. In the early years, when Cyril was getting started in the insurance and real estate business, I used to help out in the office. Also worked in the main office downtown for 3 years during the war.

No children — I guess that's why God gave me the talent to understand cats for which I am most thankful. However, we've known the pleasure of having young people around. My sister's eldest daughter, Pauline, came to us just out of high school and lived with us five and one half years and what a joy she was and still is though she is now married and has a home of her own. Niece Marlene came and stayed with us for two years, and is now married. And last came Patricia, a second cousin from a family of thirteen. Pat was with us

over four years. Never a dull moment and oh, yes, they provided a built-in 'kitten sitter' as well.

I would advise young hopefuls to move slowly in the judging field. Take an extra year or two to make sure you are ready. It is to their advantage, for when the ribbons are hung, that's final and they better be right! The Best Cat must be the 'Best Cat', always abide by the Golden Rule. I believe cat judges are born, not made.

Hobbies? Yes, indeed. First of course is CATS! Then antiques, glass, china, copper as well as furniture. Being a collector, our home is crammed with 'junk' but we both enjoy it. Also I have a rose garden which gives us problems in this cold climate. I also hook wool rugs from scratch and do needle point. We have a lake home in northern Minnesota that we enjoy in the summer. So with always working on our local shows, I do keep busy.

Yes, I do think breeders are working hard to produce excellent cats. In the early years, we had a few outstanding cats in a show. One All Breed show and one judge but today, we have quad shows with many new breeds and a great many cats of 'Best Cat' quality which makes judging more difficult. To put Best Long Hair against Best Short Hair for Best Cat is a very difficult decision to make.

I object to poor condition in both long and short haired cats. Condition will often decide a win. I dislike the excessive use of powder in long hairs and the starving of Siamese cats most of all. I like to see all cats well fed and nicely groomed.

You are so right about the Aby being controversial in the Judges Ring! My opinion is that the standard is changed too frequently which makes it most difficult for the breeders as well as we judges. I find one type on the west coast, another in the east and still another in the mid-west. It's too bad, for the Aby is a beautiful and lovely breed.

I really do not feel it's fair to any cat to be shown every weekend. Knowing what little home bodies cats are, I feel that being in a show so often, surely must be very hard for them, perhaps even fatal and really, is it worth it???

As you know, I rarely show cats anymore and I guess if the breeders want all their Special Regional Awards, it's up to them but for the sake of the cats, I feel one set of regional awards would be sufficient.

Yes, indeed, I notice difference in coat color etc. in the different climates. Dampness, I feel, has a lot to do with coat color and coat in both long and short haired cats and of course a good diet is most important to every cat all the days of its life.

My Siamese cat 'Schnutzi' just jumped on my lap. She is nine years old, born and raised here and to this day, she is **only** 'Mamma's little girl'! She is the best little 'bed bug' I've ever had!

In closing, I want to thank my husband for putting up with 'us cats' these many years and thanks too, to my wonderful 'cat family', each and every one of you, for giving me so much. I can never repay you for what you have given me. Again a big 'thank you' from the bottom of my heart.