

BIRTH OF A LIBRARY

Roberta Billig

The story of the CAT GENETICS LIBRARY, founded by the Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated, goes back to the year 1955. Fate, in the person of Miss Mary McGuire, placed in my hands a number of The American Cat Association, Incorporated stud books starting with volume one.

This precious gift gave rise in my mind to what must come of all the old material I had collected. Discussion followed with my husband Harvey E. Billig, Jr., M.D., F.I.C.S., Charles G. Victor, Joseph H. Jenkins and the members of the Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated. The result was a plan that incorporated pleas for donations of suitable material by club members and Charles G. Victor, donation of binding the old and fragile by the Billig Clinic, the actual supervision and management of binding to be handled by Joseph H. Jenkins and the task of sorting fell to the lot of your writer.

Our feeling was that a history of the cat fancy in America plus all possible lineal information should be a part of the public domain, available to all, dominated by none. With this premise we proceeded to create a heritage for future cat fanciers, research and the cat lover.

Our own collection represented a fine collection of books old and new plus numerous scholarly texts collected by my husband in his works on genetic inheritance. Charles G. Victor gathered material from near and far adding old items he had on hand. Prior to their deaths, Mildred Alexander gave her collection and Bess H. Morse contributed catalogs of all but the first California Cat Club show. The ball was rolling and many far sighted people came to make donations monetary and otherwise. Among our donors were Cat Fanciers, Federation, Incorporated, Richard Orman, The American Cat Association, Incorporated, Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated, American Burmese Association, Land of Verdugos Cat Club, Miss Mary McGuire, Jessie James Mayer, Lee Carnahan, Mrs. Frank Ott and all members of the Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated, as individuals.

The old pedigree section began to grow by leaps and bounds with help of Delphine Bloomquist, Adelaide Killman, Charles G. Victor, Jolie Smith, Mrs. Frank Ott and Dr. and Mrs. Harvey E. Billig, Jr. These are being published gradually in the quarterly Paw Purri and in the end will be bound for the library.

Photographs make a handsome addition and include many taken at the Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated, shows by Hans Bomskow, Ruth Gramley, Charles G. Victor, Mildred Alexander and Dr. and Mrs. Harvey E. Billig, Jr., contributed interesting photographs of famous cats and people of the show world.

The collection had become enormous at this point to include magazines from 1909, approximately forty years of catalogs (many marked) and books starting with 1913 and include many out of print ones. The collection had become not only large but important and Mr. Joseph H. Jenkins arranged our listing in the published list

of libraries of the United States and further traveled to Sacramento with my husband Harvey, to participate in a state wide conference on Behavioral Science.

Joseph H. Jenkins and Harvey then approached the Chief Librarian, Jack Ramsey, of the Glendale City Public Library and a dream became a reality for posterity. The books were then moved from the Sons of the Revolution Library, due to be demolished by urban renewal, to the Glendale Public Library Tropicco Branch and are now irrevocably donated to the City of Glendale Public Library.

We come now to the year 1969 and to a wonderous event in the gift of Ida Reeves and Charles G. Victor of her beautiful English watercolors of famous cats. Doctor and I contributed suitable framing and the collection was presented to the Glendale Public Library and accepted on their behalf by Chief Librarian Jack Ramsey at the 1969 Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated, show.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Webb, Silver Mesa Cattery, and Mrs. T. Donald Buchan, Wee Heather Cattery, heard of our efforts and graciously loaned for exhibition many paintings of their famous cats from their private collections of Ida Reeves paintings for this same 1969 show.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Webb immediately grasped the import of the library and followed with many donations of material from their collection. These donations continue and are to include Cat Fanciers Association, Incorporated, stud books in cooperation with Mrs. Alexander M. Dickie and thus complete the entire catalog of stud books published in the United States. This will mean one may trace the lineal history of all registered cats in the United States which represents a gift of great value to posterity. Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Webb are also intending to offer a complete set of Cat Fanciers Association, Incorporated, Year Books* and this covers a wide wonderful picture of things pertaining to cats and cat lovers.

Happily the 1969 Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated show was a profitable one and the club was able to make a donation of five hundred dollars for the purchase of cat material ; the Glendale Public Library has this under their jurisdiction and is purchasing many fine additions.

1970 has seen the City of Glendale start the building of a handsome new main library building and upon completion the cat material will come home to rest permanently in the "Special Events" section.

Two gifts of great importance have been received in the last few days. Ida Reeves has donated the Frances Simpson "The Book Of The Cat" published in 1903 and Mrs. Matilda Jenkins has donated a Memorial to her husband Joseph H. Jenkins in the purchase of the very rare (to quote from the catalog) "Foujita and Michael Joseph: "A Book Of Cats", NY Covici Frieds 1930 Folio. One of five hundred numbered copies, signed by Foujita. Twenty exquisite fullpage drawings by the famous Japanese artist are each accompanied by a tender

*The CFA Year Books will be added each year as they are published. Ed.

prose poem. Printed on handmade Arches paper. This Memorial to Joseph H. Jenkins could not be more carefully selected and represents his love of library treasures and his knowledge and love of Oriental Cultures acquired in much travel in the China of old and Japan old and new.

All material may be studied, but never removed, at the Glendale Public Library Tropic Branch, 1501 South Brand Boulevard, Glendale. Where possible, arrangements may be made with the library to photocopy excerpts.

Without the tireless efforts and generosity of many and in particular those of Joseph H. Jenkins, Charles G. Victor, Billig Clinic, Harvey E. Billig, Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated, individual members of Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated, this could never have become a reality. To all we owe a great debt of love and respect for this treasure and ours is the opportunity to make this the finest collection of "Material Cat" in America.

Mrs. Harvey E. Billig, Jr. (Roberta Billig)
Secretary—Jewel City Cat Club, Incorporated.

(NOTE: Anyone wishing to donate material to the Glendale Library, please get in touch with Mr. Charles G. Victor, 512 Heliotrope Drive, Los Angeles CA 90004.)

OTHER LIBRARIES OWNING COMPLETE SERIES OF CFA YEAR BOOKS:

The Complete Set of Year Books has been Donated to the following Libraries in **1970**:

ATLANTA PUBLIC LIBRARY, 126 Carnegie Way NW, Atlanta,
GA 30303

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY, Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn,
NY 11238

ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY, 400 Cathedral St., Baltimore,
MD 21201

GLENDALE LIBRARY, TROPICO BRANCH, (Donors the Harold
Webbs) 1501 South Brand St., Glendale, CA 91204

HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, 500 McKinney Ave., Houston, TX
77002

KANSAS CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY, 311 E. 12th St., Kansas City,
MO 64106

NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC LIBRARY, 219 Loyola Ave., New Or-
leans, LA 70140

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY, 251. McAllister, San Fran-
cisco CA 94102

SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY, 4th & Madison, Seattle, WA 98104