

SEVEN DECADES OF BLUE-EYED WHITES

Blanche V. Smith



Mrs. Smith

"It is a pity to try mating white cats with any other variety, as broken-coloured cats will probably be the result."

—Frances Simpson,
Book of the Cat, 1903.

"To obtain kittens with really dark blue eyes it is best to have one of the parents odd-eyed or yellow-eyed, or even two odd-eyed parents are better than two blue-eyed."

—Mrs. F. E. J. Champion,
The Cat Review, Oct. 25, 1903.

"The whites imported from India are vastly superior to the ordinary Persian, their chief characteristic being a long, trailing coat, snub face, short thick legs, beautifully tufted ears, and, of course, cobby in shape."

—Miss D. B. Champion,
Everybody's Cat Book, 1909.

"If you have a Blue Eyed White Female and wish to outcross to a Blue Male for type improvement, select a Blue strain that runs to good clear orange eyes rather than the more popular deep copper . . . (Then) breed their best Blue Eyed White daughter to a good White Male of well established Blue Eye Color, thus avoiding the introduction of a dominance of orange eyes into your Blue Eyed White strain."

—Arch E. Horne, Cat Courier, January 1935.

Portland (OR) Cat Club, Dec. 18, 1936.

Best Cat—BEW f Ch. Fairwood's Pansy Ma Belle, Mrs. Cleary.
Judge: Hazel Bundrock (CFA).

"Mrs. T. R. James, Bear Cattery, recently purchased a lovely Blue-Eyed bred female from Mrs. J. F. Jenkins, Lilac Cattery. Mrs. James values, this cat highly as she is strictly color-bred for six generations and has sound hearing. Mrs. James bought her as a mate for her Dbl. Ch. Major Snow Bear who is also a color-bred (BE) White."

—Cat Courier, March 1937.

At the Dec. 4-5, 1937 Minneapolis CFA Show, there were twenty-one Blue-Eyed Whites entered . . . (fifteen of them "pekefaces")

—Mrs. T. R. James, Cat Courier, Feb. 1938.

As these random quotations from old cat literature show, the Blue-Eyed White cat has been much written about, and theories about its proper breeding has been discussed for at least seven decades.

The belief in the magic of colorbreeding went out of style, perhaps for good, in the early 1950's, but I was surprised to learn that the value of Odd-Eyed Whites in Blue-Eyed breeding had been recognized as early as 1903. When in the '50's Rita Swenson and I fought for CFA recognition of the Odd-Eyed as an aid to our BEW breeding programs, we thought we were breaking new ground, and many of our fellow breeders disagreed with our ideas. Both Gallahad's Faith and Gallahad's Heritage are from Odd-Eyed to Odd-Eyed matings.

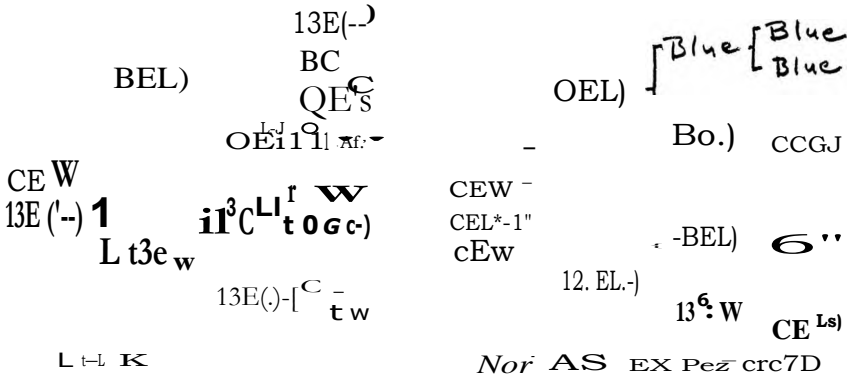
The Odd-Eyes of course, result (in subsequent generations) from crosses of Blue-Eyed Whites to Blues (or to Copper-Eyed Whites), and our thanks for the idea of out-crossing to Blues must go to Annie B. Revington who so greatly improved so many of the Persian colors. By the mid-1930's, the practice merited mention in the *Cat Courier*, but by most breeders, only the resulting Blue-Eyeds, not the Odd-Eyes were being used.

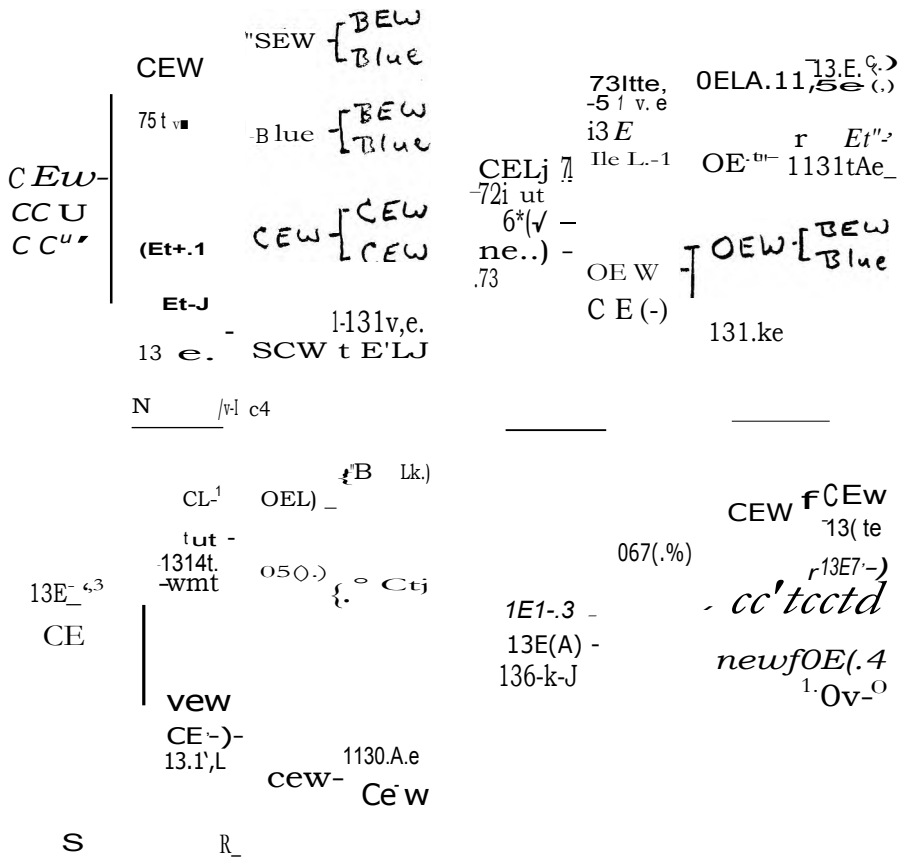
In addition to the benefits in type, the introduction of Blues (or even Blacks) also result in purer coat color.

Despite Miss Simpson's and Mrs. James' faith in pure BEW-to-BEW breeding, almost all of today's outstanding Blue-Eyed Whites have Blues in their backgrounds. It takes only a couple of generations of BEW-to-BEW to lose much of the type we value today — although in most lines such colorbreeding does tend to improve eye color. My practice is to mate a good Blue-Eyed White to a Blue, then mate the resulting Odd-Eyes back to their Blue-Eyed parent. Their litters will consist of Blues, Copper-Eyed Whites, and Odd-Eyed Whites in the general proportions of two Blues, one CEW, and one OEW. The Odd-Eyes resulting from this mating are then mated to Blue-Eyes or to Odd-Eyes. Body type of either mating will be about the same, but eye color is likely to be better in the Odd-Eyed to Odd-Eyed mating.

BREEDING CHARTS

Odd-Eyed to Odd-Eyed Mating





Here are a number of pedigrees of some of my recent litters. They will make it plain that breeding for Whites with both superior type and blue eyes is a game in which the odds are all against the player. But to us few confirmed Blue-Eyed White breeders, it's the best game in town — that's why we are always planning to try one more roll of the dice.

Much has been written of the prevalence of deafness in Blue-Eyed Whites. Despite more than fifty generations of sincere attempts to breed out this defect, it is as common today as it ever was, and I have come to believe that it is so linked with the genes for blue eyes that deafness must be considered a more or less normal accompaniment of blue eyes in White cats. As a matter of principle, Blue-Eyed White breeders avoid deaf-to-deaf matings. Yet occasionally such matings do occur --- either accidentally or otherwise — and when they do, sound-hearing kittens frequently appear. Similarly, sound-hearing to sound-hearing results at best in about fifty per cent sound-hearing kittens, even in Odd-Eyed to Odd-Eyed matings.

To look at the favorable side of the coin, there is no question but that deafness is an advantage in showing — such cats are quieter and less distractable at shows. And while we breeders would never sell a deaf cat as an outdoor pet, we have found that to the indoor cat, deafness is seldom, if ever, a handicap. My deaf cats and kittens who have the run of the house behave no differently than those who can hear except that to attract their attention I must, instead of calling, tap on the floor — the resulting vibration works as well as words. In lovability and understanding there's no difference whatever.

The Champions (mother and daughter), and Mrs. Revington played tremendously important parts in the development of their Blue-Eyed White Persians, as did Mrs. James, despite her misplaced emphasis on BEW colorbreeding and her illusions on "pekefaces!"

Others who I remember from the fifties and earlier are Rebecca James, Billie Bancroft, Bert Tebbetts, Ruth Hayes, Rita Swenson, Helen Hildebrandt, Mae Fleming. So far as I can discover, the first Blue-Eyed White Grand Champions date from this era. Two of the earliest ones were Lila Rippy's Van Dyke's Miss Bob White and Ruth Hayes' Milky Way Enchanted Prince. Of that period, too, but still active today are Cora Swan (who's lucky enough to have three Blue-Eyed White Grand Champions at home with her right now), Lila Rippy, Marie Klinkhammer, Francine Puckett, Marge Needles, Gladys Baldwin, Richard Gebhardt. Lois Weston and Marcena Myers, although their chief interests are elsewhere, have produced some outstanding BEW's, as have many other breeders.

Newer breeders who have decided to concentrate on the game of chance with us are Ron Luke, Collette Griffin, Will Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Hayes Callaghan. Mrs. Prose and Nell Smits of Holland, and Mrs. M. Shirane of Japan are some of the many people overseas who are also taking a great interest in this color of Persian.

The Blue-Eyed White is one of the rarer colors — only about 2,000 have been registered by CFA in the past twelve years — and, as I have tried to make clear, they are far from easy to produce. It is just for this reason, though, that they present one of the greatest challenges of all the breeds and colors. Over the years for all of us BEW breeders there's been unmeasurable hard work, great anticipation, much disappointment — but, often when we least expect it, great accomplishment, too. A Blue-Eyed White Best-in-Show or Grand Champion is, we think, an achievement of which we can be more than ordinarily proud.

Biographical Note

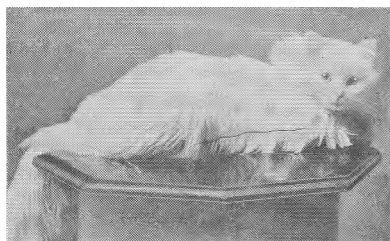
Blanche V. Smith, CFA All Breed Judge, in private life Mrs. Raymond D. Smith, wife of the well known publisher of CATS Magazine, has successfully bred and shown the Blue-Eyed White Persians for many years, and is considered one of our top authorities on this color. She writes for CATS regularly as well as continues her full judging schedule. (See Judges Section.)

C. S.

BLANCHE V. SMITH'S ALBUM OF BEAUTIFUL BLUE-EYED WHITE'S

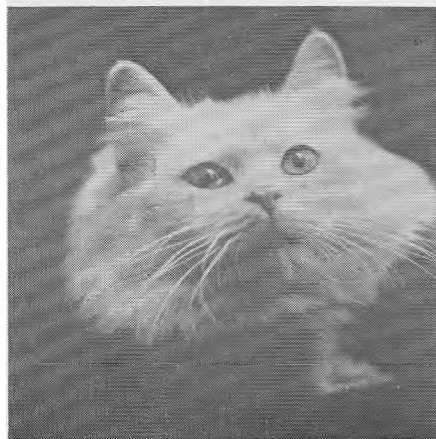
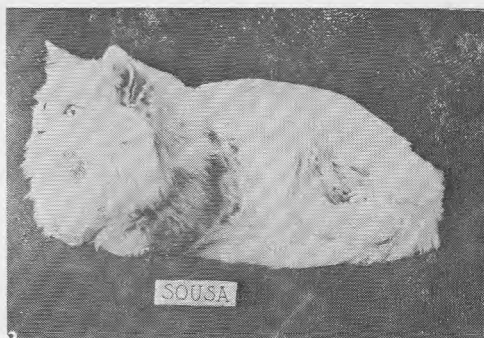


1. THE STORM KING—A Blue-Eyed White Persian of the early 1900's. (BOOK OF THE CAT, 1903).



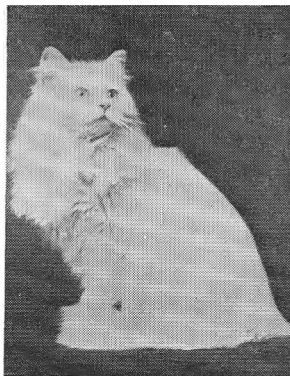
2. AJAX, another "outstanding" American BEW Persian from the BOOK OF THE CAT, 1903.

3. SOUSA was called a "prize winning" White in the CAT JOURNAL of July 1906.

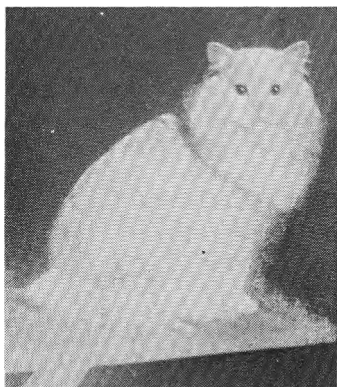


4. WHITE ADONIS, BEW who was Best in Show at Hartford, 1909. (EVERYBODY'S CAT BOOK, D. Champion, 1909).

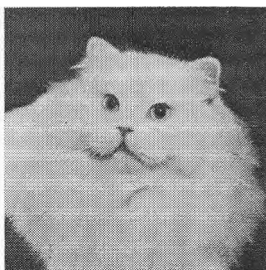
5. CH. EDELWEISS
was typical of
the BEW's



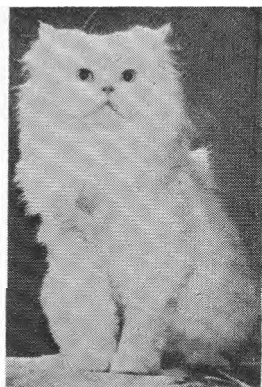
of her era. (CAT
COURIER, July
1920).



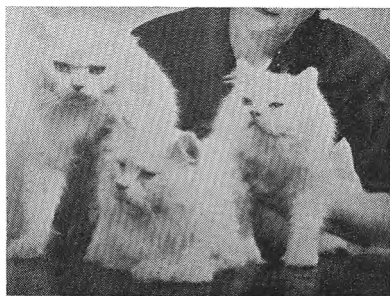
6. DUVAL OF WILLOW
Best White, NYC
1936. (CAT COURIER
November 1936).



**8. Ruth Hayes' GR.
CH. MILKY WAY'S
ENCHANTED
PRINCE.** One of
the first BEW
Grands, AA
BEW male, 1953.

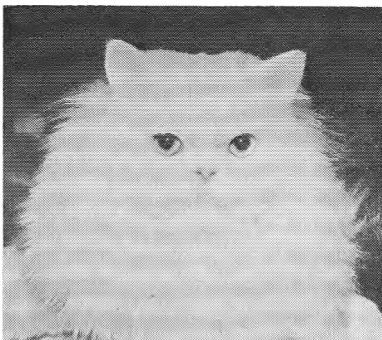


**7. May Fleming's
TWINKLING
STAR of
EVERGREEN.**
All Midwest
BEW male, '53-
'54, AA '54.



**9. Three of Lila Rippy's Blue-
Eyed Whites in 1953. On the
right is GR. CH. VAN DYKE'S
MISS BOB WHITE, one of
the first BEW Grands, and
All Midwestern in 1953.**

10. Left, DB. CH. GALLAHAD'S FAITH, 1957 AA BEW and top AE Persian Female. Right, Will Thompson's DB. GR. & SX. CH. HIRONDELLE'S NOVA OF QUIKSILVER, 1965. AA and highest-scoring BEW of all time. (Note resemblance of these cousins.)



11. The late TR. GR. CH. ILLINI PINES ADONIS OF PURR MOR. With his death, February 1970, his owners, John and Lois Hermann, and the cat fancy lost one of today's great BEW's.



12. The Author's GR. CH. GALLAHAD'S HERITAGE, another of today's great Blue-Eyed Whites.