

THE MAINE COON CAT

Earl Eugene Eminhizer

In the past five years more and more people have become aware of the existence of a little known and misunderstood breed of cats — the Maine Coons. Those of us who breed this cat are happy with the new interest. I say new because seventy or eighty years ago the Maine Coon cat dominated the Eastern cat shows. Leo, a tabby Maine Coon, according to the **Book of the Cat**, was best cat in a New York City show in 1895. An article in the **CFA Year Book** for 1959, states that a Brown Tabby, Cosie, also won in a New York City Madison Square Garden show as a neuter that same year. Another Maine Coon named King Max, won the Boston shows in 1897, 98, and 99. This indicates that Maine Coons are not a new breed in the fancy, but an old breed now making a comeback.

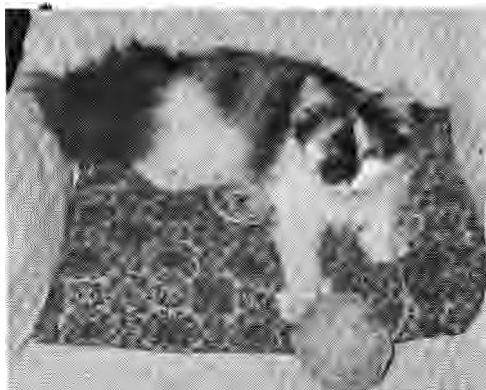
Knowledge of Maine Coon cats as a breed goes back at least to the early 1860's. F. R. Pierce records in the **Book of the Cat** that he and his brother owned a black Maine Coon in 1861 who was known as "Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines." Although cat registeries do not go back to the 1860's early CFA stud books contain Maine Coons. Twenty eight are reported listed in first



Dr. Eminhizer

volume of the CFA register.

Just why this delightful breed became almost unknown to the fancy is difficult to determine. But following 1904 they seemed to have dropped out of the shows completely. The people in Maine, the original home of these cats, did not forget them and they organized the Central Maine Cat Club in the 1950's and held shows just for Maine Coons. Through the interest of people in Maine such as Ruby Dyer and Mrs. Robert Whittemore, the Maine Coons have survived. Starting in the mid



Emin-Dale's Cali, Maine Coon Cat

1960's other people became interested in them who lived outside Maine and through their efforts the Maine Coon is now making a comeback. Three of the show-sponsoring groups recognize them for championship showing at the present time, and the Maine Coon Breeders and Fanciers Association, an organized group for the advancement of the breed, hopes that others will soon do the same.

The Maine Coon cat is best known for its size. My own interest came about because of the description a friend of mine made of her Maine cats in which she stressed that they were larger than any cats she had known before. Mrs. Kelly had a number of pictures of her cats who lived with her in the

Methodist parsonage at Castine, Maine, just after World War I. They were large and when I bought my first one from Mrs. Whittemore it was because I hoped for a larger than usual cat. Since then I have bred one male who weighed in excess of 33 pounds. Size is not the only feature of the Maine cat. They are also usually quiet, shy, and intelligent.

In breeding we are aiming at a large cat. We also want him to stand higher on his legs than other longhairs. His

body should be long, as should his tail. The hair length will vary from one part of the body to the next as is described in the standard below. They usually have longer necks than other breeds, and their head is round with a nose which has a slight break and is of medium length.

We have found that their coats require about the same care as is required for other longhairs, although its texture is somewhat different. Generally a good comb used once every few days will keep them in good condition.

One of the problems faced by the breeders today, and one which is going to be difficult to resolve, is that of polydactylism. This occurs commonly in Maine cats and is considered by some as an important characteristic. Resolution of the problem is going to require more research into the history of



Emin-Dale's Cosline, Particolor Maine Coon Cat



Emin-Dale's Penobscot, White Maine Coon Cat

the cat. Generally, one encounters no more problems in breeding Maine cats than in other breeds. We have found that we generally get only one litter a year. All of our females have made very good mothers for their own kittens, and have mothered other kittens on occasion when something has required a shift of kittens to another female.

Although for several years some of us interested in the breed worked alone to develop a standard and get it accepted, real progress has come through the organization of the Maine Coon Breeders and Fanciers Association. This group has been active in working with CFA in attempting to get a standard accepted and registration of the breed started in CFA. Mrs. Betty Ljostad has spent many hours in letter writing on behalf of the breed. It is our hope that provisional recognition will be given for the 1971-72 show season, and if that develops, CFA shows will again see cats like Molly Bond (CFA Reg. No. 5) .

Dr. Earl Eugene Eminhizer (Th.D.)
President, MCBFA.

MAINE COON BREEDERS' & FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION STANDARD FOR THE MAINE COON CAT

HEAD 20 POINTS

- Head shape** Medium in width, except in the older more developed studs, where it should be quite broad. Cheek bones high. The nose and face should be medium long, with an appearance of squareness to the muzzle. Little or no break in nose.
- Ears** Large in size. Tufted, pointed, and wide at base.
- Eyes** Large, round, wide set. Slightly oblique setting.
- Chin** Firm and in line with upper lip and nose.
- Undesirable** Short flat face, or long pointed nose. Undershot chin. Short rounded, narrow set ears. Narrow, slanting eyes.

BODY 30 POINTS

- Neck** Medium long. In the older more mature cats, especially studs, the neck should be thick and muscular, *giving* the appearance of power and strength.
- Body shape** Muscular, powerful, and long. The chest should be full and from medium to large is size. The body should be level, but in stance, the hind legs hold the body slightly lower than the front. There should be a definite squareness where the hind legs join the body at the rump. All the physical aspects of the cat should be in proportion to one another.
- Tail** Long and full. Wide at base and should taper to its end with no kinks.
- Legs & Feet** Substantial, muscular, wide set, and of medium height. The cat should stand well up on its forelegs giving the impression of an unbroken line from shoulder to forepaw. Paws should be large, round, and well tufted, with five toes in front and four in back.

Undesirable Short legs and untufted feet. Short cobby body and short neck. A rounded rump. Delicate, dainty bone structure.

COAT 20 POINTS

Coat The fur on the front shoulders is short and should become gradually longer along the back towards the tail, ending in a shaggy, heavy coat on the "britches". The sides of the cat's coat should gradually get longer until the stomach is reached, where it should be long and full. A full ruff is not expected ; however, there should be a slight frontal ruff beginning at the base of the ears. The fur on the tail should be long and full. Feet should be tufted. Coat should be fine, heavy, lustrous, and should fall smoothly. A slight undercoat may be carried. This is the optimum coat and will vary with climate.

COAT COLOR 10 POINTS

Coat color The coat may be any color or any combination of colors. Winners are not to be withheld for buttons, locketts, or spots.

EYE COLOR 10 POINTS

Eye color The eye color may be the same as that required for that color in other longhairs, or green. Clarity of color is desirable.

CONDITION 10 POINTS

Condition Solid, firm, muscular. Should be presented in well-groomed manner.

Biographical Note

My wife and I have Emin-Dale Cattery where we breed along with Maine Coon cats, Himalayans, Persians, and Manx. We have been breeding Maine Coons since 1964. My wife and I both teach. She is in charge of an arts and crafts program for seventh grade girls in the Howland School District, and is a graduate of Youngstown State University. I am Assist. Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Youngstown State University where I have been on the faculty since 1958, and I teach logic, church history, and biblical studies. I have a Doctor of Theology from The School of Theology at Claremont, California. We are members of the Western Reserve Cat Club, the local CFA club. We got interested in cats through the Pomona, California pound where we adopted a kitten while in school at Claremont. They gave us some literature on cats and cat care. We had never been aware of some of the breeds of cats to that time and started to attend cat shows in our area in the fall. After going to shows for a while we bought some Persians, Himalayans, and a pair of Maine Coons; and we have been in the fancy every since.

The Maine Coon Breeders and Fanciers Association was brought into being mostly through the efforts of Mrs. Betty Ljostad, Port Chester, N. Y., with the help of Nancy Silsbee, Lakeville, Conn. and Mrs. Florence Wartell, Yonkers, N. Y. I had been writing to every one I could find interested in Maine Coons for three years without results, but with a concentration of interest in 1968 in the area near Port Chester, Mrs. Ljostad was able to get a group together at her home and thereby starting the MCBFA. The first meeting was held September 21, 1968.

E. E. & L. D. EMINHIZER
EMIN-DALE CATTERY
1125 Trumbull Ave., S. E.
Warren, Ohio 44484
Phone (216) 359-5096