

A Brief History of the National Chinese Owl Club

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The exact origin of the Chinese Owl is uncertain. It probably was brought to Europe from Africa, although this is not for certain. The name "Chinese" was invented by the French pigeon dealer for commercial purposes, the mystery of the Orient sort of thing. One thing is for certain, as far as Chinese are concerned, they are here to stay. With the enthusiastic men and women of the N.C.O.C., they will continue to become more popular as years go by.

In the following article, I've included a summary of the N.C.O.C. as well as I could, with the information I could gather. While not complete by any means, it is hoped all members and interested fanciers will enjoy reviewing the past and present days of the N.C.O.C. and gain a slight insight into the future of our club.

The first Chinese Owls were imported approximately in the late 1800's and didn't exactly overwhelm the fancy. Many fanciers thought they could "improve" the Chinese Owl by crossing them with African Owls. They didn't exactly improve them according to most of our present day fanciers. They resembled a poor quality African Owl and a worst specimen of the true Chinese Owl.

Bill Hawkinson, Sr. was one of the first men to bring to light the truer likeness of our present day Chinese Owl. When Bill came to this country he brought with him Chinese Owls, being of our present day foundation. Conflict arose, because of the two types of Chinese Owls. Bill stuck to his guns and bred his self imported birds while some fanciers (especially around Chicago) stuck to breeding the African-Chinese crosses. This situation continued for several years.

In the Midwest, were a group of dedicated Chinese Owls fanciers who wanted the true Chinese Owls and not the crosses. Some importation resulted in bringing Chinese Owls from Spain via Ralph Brage. Don Hagen (now deceased) from Iowa and James Moyer from Pennsylvania received these imports and now their work began. In Minnesota, another man named Roy Huston had some Danish imports. With this start some of our more prominent breeders came to light. Don Hagen, James Moyer, Howard Hart, Elsie Thomas and Bill Howe were among those first dedicated fanciers.

In 1958 the Midwest Chinese Owl Club was formed. The groundwork was laid and now the work really began. The club began to grow and has sported over 140 members at times. The African-Chinese crosses are a memory now and the true Chinese Owl took form once again. If you were to ask some of the first fanciers they could tell you that our present day birds are much improved over those first imports. Our hats are off to men and women like James Moyer, Don Hagen, Bill Howe, Howard Hart and Elsie Thomas for their belief in a better Chinese Owl. The original picture Standard drawn up by H. P. Macklin has changed very little over the years. It has changed mainly in matters of color and tail qualifications.

There are many top notch breeders in the country and world that have contributed greatly to the improvement of the Chinese Owl! I've had the privilege of knowing and associating with many Chinese Owl breeders over the years and it has brought me a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure. I hope you enjoy this issue on Chinese Owls and share my feelings of pleasure and satisfaction as you read this for your enjoyment.