

History of the Chinese Owl

By Unknown

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No one is quite certain of the exact origin of the Chinese Owl. Some believe it came from North Africa, others believe it came from Northern India. Those who first brought the breed to Europe, where it appeared around 1850, had censored its origin. A French pigeon dealer by the name of Destriveaux had them in Paris, France. It is recorded that a good pair of Chinese Owls was of equal value of a good team of horses. In 1865 Destriveaux sent Chinese Owls to King Porsche in Germany. These birds were greatly prized and were blues. He would later receive others of varying colors, the results of crosses. It was a slow painful process to improve the quality and the color. Germany can be credited with the early development of the Chinese Owl. The German Saddle Owl, Egyptian Owl and the German Shield Owl were used in early development.

Due to the lack of clarity in early show reports, the appearance of Chinese Owls in America is also hard to trace. They were generally listed as "Owls," with no consideration as to English, African or Chinese. It is believed they appeared in the United States in the 1870's. The first printed standard for the Chinese Owl in the U.S. was in 1879, and listed "Whiskered Owls." The first Owl club in America was the American Owl Club, organized in 1893. The Chinese Owl Club at that time was associated with the less ornate African Owl. In 1948 the United Owl Club was organized and the drawing was made for the first standard.

Through the efforts of James Moyer, Ralph Bragge, and William Hawkinson, Sr., the Chinese Owls were imported into this country. Birds were imported from Denmark, Germany and Spain. The Spanish imports vastly improved the quality in the frilling.

In 1958 the Mid West Chinese Owl Club was formed in Iowa. It is the parent club of our NCOC. Howard Hart was one of the early promoters and secretary of the Mid West Club. It took many dedicated fanciers to get our Chinese Owls to where it is today, and shows of 400 Chinese Owls are not uncommon.