

THE BELGIAN SHEEPDOG



The Belgian Sheepdog Club of America, Inc.

Mrs Sam Speck
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1959

This booklet is dedicated to the memory of three members of the Belgian Sheepdog Club of America whose devotion and loyalty to the breed caused their fellow members of its Board of Directors to wish to honor them for their service in promoting the breed by this dedication:

Virginia Dykema
Helen Quilhot
William B. Vestal

The picture on the cover is of the "Belgians on the Skyline" (Thor C.D.X., Bonita del Rio Carmello, Ch. Hadje de Flanders, U.D.T.) who were owned by Mr. and Mrs. Vestal some years ago.

Mr. Vestal was informed, shortly before his death, that this lovely picture, a favorite of the entire fancy for years, had been selected to be the only picture included in this booklet.

THE STORY OF THE BELGIAN SHEEPDOG

- and -

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Belgian Sheepdog Club of America

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this short description is to give the reader a word picture of the Belgian Sheepdog and to present the find qualities and desirable characteristics of the breed, one of the dogs of the Working Group. Therefore, our first step will be to introduce the reader to the origins and background of the Belgian Sheepdog.

HISTORY

The Belgian Sheepdog has an ancestry which seems to be common to many of the herding dogs used throughout the modern world. The lineage can be traced back to Central Europe, particularly to the Mooreland dog.

Since Europe then was thinly populated as compared to modern times, domesticated animals required herding and protection from attackers such as wolves. Not only was there danger from wild life; but, also, the rigorous climate demanded animals that could withstand all kinds of weather: heat, cold, rain, snow, any combination. As people did not move about too much in the past, a dog could be developed over the years that would meet the needs of and conditions present in isolated areas. The Belgian Sheepdog came into being as a result of the rugged climate and requirements of the shepherd for a bright, strong, and agile dog.

Eventually the breed, truly the dog of the Belgian Shepherd which included several

varieties of color and coat became so prominent as to be considered the national dog of Belgium. The breed inspired Ouida's Dog of Flanders and the more famous poet, philosopher, and dramatist Maeterlinck's Our Friend the Dog: both indicating the widespread and exceptional interest of the Europeans. Belgian royalty even sponsored one type of the Belgian Sheepdog.

The first organization for the purpose of breeding specific types of Belgian Sheepdogs was initiated by Professor Reul v.d. in 1891 under the name of the Club du Chien de Berger Belge. A few years later, in 1897, the history of the Groenendael (long haired, black) Belgian Sheepdog began. About this time, a resident of Uccle, Mr. Beernaerts, had found in Feluy-Arquennes a Belgian shepherd dog with long black hair working as a herd dog. Impressed by its beauty, speed, and gentle sureness in herding the flock, he acquired it and called it "Piccard d'Uccle."

Meanwhile, N. Rose, proprietor of the Restaurant du Chateau de Groenendael, had already bred several sheepdogs with long black hair and owned a bitch named "Petite." "Piccard d'Uccle" was bred to "Petite" and produced "Duc de Groenendael", a sheepdog with long black hair, beautiful little ears and good tail carriage, but with an enormous white "cravat" on its chest. From the same litter came "Pitt", "Baronne", "Margot", and "Berger", all named "of Groenendael", and it is thus that the kennel name became the name of one of the types of Belgian Sheepdogs. All our good Groenendaels descend from these ancestors, and you have only to trace their pedigrees back far enough to find at the origin "Piccard d'Uccle" and "Petite."

