

FROM

MEMBER CLUBS

KEESHONDEN

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should any spectators or dog fanciers at Westminster read this column, I would like to extend an invitation to visit our benches and admire our intelligent and beautiful breed.

The history of the Keeshond is involved but interesting. He can trace his ancestry (together with his European and Spitz relatives) back to prehistoric times, probably originating in western Asia, whence he emigrated to Siberia, China, Japan, the Balats and other islands of the Pacific and west into central Europe. He is a member of the Spitz family and claims near relationship with Chows, Samoyeds and, closest of all, the Pomeranians. Dogs of the Spitz type have been common all over Europe and Asia for hundreds of years. In England either the Pomeranian or Spitz dog are pictured as far back as the 14th century. The large Pomeranian is seen in numerous portraits and family groups by Gainsborough. The Spitz appears on two monuments in Germany, one a memorial to the Vinegrower of the Rhineland at Stuttgart. The Greeks have carved him on their tombstones. Ladies of fashion in the 18th century con-

sidered him an asset to their beauty. The squire, the burgher and the carrier, the vinegrower, the bargee all treasured him as a constant companion. He is seen as the dog of kings and the dog of the people but he is always the dog of the home, from the house dogs of the lakedwellers to these modern times when he is rapidly finding his place in the home once more.

No one can say when the Keeshond first made his appearance in Holland but it is generally supposed that his ancestors descended on barges carrying timber and coal from the Schwarzwald (Black Forest) and Wurttemberg, or crossed the frontier from Westphalia and Rhineland into Gelderland and Limburg. He was certainly well known in Holland in the 18th century.

The origin of the name "Keeshond" is uncertain and various explanations have been advanced. It is said the name "Kees" was used in 1672 to describe the pro-French party, as Jan Kees, a member of the political party intriguing against William of Orange was always accompanied by a barge dog, but it seems unlikely that the name had any connection with the dog at that time. Others contend that the name was not used until 1781 when the Orangists and the Patriots were politically strongly opposed. The latter party was colloquially called "Keezen," meaning the "rabble" by their opponents. The barge dogs became the emblem of the Keezen and were portrayed by their enemies in many contemporary draw-

ings and cartoons; usually represented in human clothes and undignified circumstances. One contemporary caricature represents "a Keeshond in socks and wearing a hat like a gentleman of fashion being chased by a Prussian soldier while the Devil, playing a violin, entices him to a precipice. On the margin is printed this poem:

Tsa! Be merry, hasten, Keezen,
The Minstrel leads the way;
This now is unavoidable.
You'll have to go astray.
Farewell, farewell O Keezen!
Thou and thy Colonel
If longing for thy freedom
Dance howling down to Hell.

About the actual origin of the name "Kees" as applied to the dog, there is no doubt that it has nothing to do with the word "quay" as has been suggested. The word for quay in Dutch is "Kade" pronounced Ki as in kite. Nor has it any connection with the word cheese as many mockingly implied, since cheese in Dutch is "Kaas" and pronounced as spelled. It is possible that it may be a Germanic corruption of "Caesar," a name frequently given to dogs on the Continent, just as "Fido" is not an uncommon dog's name here. The name "Kees" used as a Christian name in Holland is short for Cornelius. Some think the name came from Cornelius de Gyselaer, who led the Patriots as he was accompanied by a gay, spirited dog. The Keeshond is called Kees (pronounced CASE) in

Dutch; the word "hond" means dog and "en" is added to denote the plural.

After his brief appearance in the political arena, the Keeshond relapsed into the quieter life of a utility dog on the canals and farms of Holland. In 1891 Keeshonden were shown in Holland. In the same year Queen Victoria showed what was described as an "overweight Pomeranian" at the English K.C. show. This dog attracted a great deal of attention and bore a marked resemblance to the barge dogs of Holland. In 1905 Mrs. Wingfield Digby visited Holland and fell in love with the dogs she saw on the barges and bought two. These dogs and their progeny were registered in England as Dutch Barge dogs. In 1923 their descendants were exhibited at the Birmingham National where they caught the eye of both the public and the dog breeders. From that moment the breed went forward. In 1925 a specialist club was formed under the title "Dutch Barge Dog" but a year later this was changed to the correct name of the breed, the "Keeshond Club."

Americans have a wonderful flair for a good thing, in as much as this dog is both beautiful, watchful and intelligent he soon was noted by the fancy here. The first Keeshonden were imported in the early 1930's direct from Germany. In 1930 the breed was officially classified by the name "Keeshonden" under Group 6—Non-Sporting Dogs. They were exhibited at the Maryland K.C. show, thus the breed first became known to the American public, and breeders and fanciers went to England for their stock. The Kees was slow to gain the recognition that is his due. However, the past few years have found him becoming more and more popular as people learn of his many excellent qualities. He has earned an enviable reputation in the show ring winning many groups and "Bests" throughout the country.

The Keeshond is a handsome dog, of well-balanced, short-coupled body; attracting attention not only by his alert carriage and intelligent expression, but also by his luxurious coat, his richly plumed tail, well curled over his back, and by his foxlike face and head with small pointed ears. His coat is very thick around the neck forming a lion-like mane. His rump and hind legs down to the hocks are also thickly coated forming the characteristic "trousers." His head, ears and lower legs are covered with thick short hair. The ideal height of fully matured dogs, measured from the withers to the ground is, for males 18 inches, females 17 inches. His expression is largely dependent on the distinctive characteristic called "spectacles," a delicately pencilled line slightly upward from the outer corner of each eye to the lower corner of the ear, coupled with distinct markings and shadings forming short but expressive eyebrows. In color he should be a mixture of grey and black.

Congratulations to Mrs. J. Whitney Peterson's Ch. Nederlan Winston of Wistonia that was BB at Brooklyn; to Betty and Edwin Cummings' Wynstraat's Garry, BB at Camden and Worcester, and to Marye Picone's Dirdon's Wonder-Wander Hodge, BB at Philadelphia, where he completed his championship. I can't forget my Barones van Kecs Valli (Ronnie) that completed her C.D. at Philadelphia after three straight winning shows, all with scores over 190. Then Mrs. Porter Washington's Ch. Wrocky of Wistonia with another BIS at Hermet.

Good luck at Westminster!— M. P. Cummings, Secretary, Gibbs Pond Rd., St. James, L. I.