

Early History

1866-1936

(reprint from Norwich Terriers USA)

The history of the Norwich Terriers is fascinating in its diversity and also in its obscurity. For almost a century many dogs and many people have contributed to the development of this breed. Its type is now well established in England and in America.

In 1914 the first known Norwich Terrier to reach American shores was William Jones, a remarkable four-footed ambassador. "Willum", as he was known to his friends, was brought over from England by the well-known horseman Robert Strawbridge. While buying a hunter at Market Harborough, Mr. Strawbridge bought William for ten shillings and sixpence from his breeder Frank "Roughrider" Jones. Willum, a dog of exceptional character - both his sire and dam had M.F.H. certificates - was a typical example of his breeder's aims. His amiable disposition endeared him as a loyal companion; he had stamina to follow a horse and the bold instinct to go to ground for fox or badger.

During the first World War, there being few Norwich bitches available, his wives were varied - game terriers all. Willum was crossed with Fox Terriers, Cairns and West Highland White Terriers. Many of his descendants - a few unregistered but recorded still exist - were actually hunt terriers. This harsh, red-coated dog with tail docked and ears cropped, "to save them from being torn, - not for looks," stamped his type on his American get. They were called Jones Terriers and in the USA today many still refer to the Norwich as Jones.

William Jones, the dog that made American Norwich Terrier history, claimed as his English ancestors a colorful and varied group of terriers. In England during the latter half of the nineteenth century at Chesterton, near Cambridge, a man appropriately called Doggy Lawrence, using a small Irish Terrier perhaps crossed with a Yorkshire Terrier, bred little red - often black and tan - terriers. They were known as the Cantab Terriers. Between 1899 and 1902 during the South African War, Jodrell Hopkins, a sports loving Cambridge undergraduate, established a livery stable after graduation and also bred terriers which resembled the native terriers found in East Anglia at that period. He mated a smooth brindle bitch of doubtful origin to a red, silky coated Cantab and called the puppies Trumpington Terriers, after the street on which he lived in Cambridge. From this litter the Master of the Norwich Staghounds, Mr. Jack Cooke, picked his Trumpington Terrier, Rags, who when bred to various bitches stamped his get with his prick ears and harsh red coat.

In 1901 Frank Jones came from Ireland as Whip to the Norwich Staghounds. Eager to breed his own small sporting red terriers, he crossed his two Glen Of Imaal Terriers

"red, fiery, harsh coated Irish scrappers" and Tinker "a small red brindle, nearly black, Cairn type" Trumpington bitch, with various hunt terriers and also back to Rags. Leaving Norfolk in 1904 to work in Market Harborough in Leicestershire, he became known as Roughrider Jones. In England a roughrider is one who breaks and schools young horses, usually for foxhunting.

Some of the Cambridge terriers in 1880 were brought to Wymondham in Norfolk where, in 1906, Lewis "Podge" Low acquired a white, leggy bitch called Ninety, by a Dandie Dinmont out of a Hunt terrier. Found wandering in the streets, she was brought to his father, a veterinarian, to be destroyed. Podge Low, liking her expression, kept her and bred her to Rags. The litter produced no white puppies and subsequently her all red litters were sold mainly to Jones.

Roughrider Jones continued breeding back to Rags, buying puppies out of Ninety and litters from his friend Horace Cole, stud groom to the Master of the Norwich Staghounds. Horace Cole bred his wire-haired terrier bitch to a Trumpington. The puppies were always red. His daughter, Mrs. Rosie Panks, today a successful Norwich breeder, bred Pax of the Briars, sire of the great English-American Champion Farndon Randolph, and Foxybrook Gene, dam of English-American Champion Ragus Goodfellow. Both have had a tremendous influence on the American Prick ear Norwich.

In 1909 Mr. Jock Read in Horstead, near Norwich, acquired a young bitch by Rags out of Ninety which he crossed, first to a Bedlington Terrier, once to a brown Staffordshire Bull Terrier, then to an Alysham - a rough-haired red street dog named after the Norfolk market town in which he was found - and back to the early terriers descended from Rags. Mr. Read, the first President of the English Norwich Terrier Club, in 1929, bred Horstead Mick, a dog which appears in many of today's pedigrees. He was a stockily built little dog, very much the stamp of our best Norwich Terriers today, and fulfilled his breeder's ambition to produce "a small red terrier, 10 pound full grown with harsh red coat, dark eyes and short legs, stocky and game." In Mick's breeding was the blood of Cantab, Trumpington, Jones, Bedlington, Staffordshire and Bull Terriers; occasional puppies reminiscent of a Bull Terrier still appear among his descendents.

Another horseman, W.E. West, the Market Harborough feedman, acquired breeding stock from Jones and supplied the Pytchley Hunt with working fox bolters. By 1920 his prick ear Farndon strain which can also be traced back to Mrs. Fagan's Brownie, were famous as working terriers and as the pets of American horsemen. The lasting Farndon influence on American Norwich prick ear breeders was established when Pax Of The Briars and his three sons migrated in the late '40s. Mr. West bred the first English prick ear Champion Farndon Red Dog, M.F.H. and the first American prick ear Champion Rachael, Mrs. Randolph's foundation bitch. In 1950 the Dean Bedfords imported Farndon Randolph, the first English and American Champion.

Mr. West's record exports to America can hardly be equalled. It is unlikely, today, that such concentration of typical stock would be parted with if it existed. England's loss was our gain with the early Champions Rachael and Victor, followed by the Champion Farndon brothers, Randolph, Rodney and Romeo. Today the Farndon influence is concentrated at Oakley, the senior prick ear kennel in America. Pemberton and Chidley also cherish the Farndon line as Jericho, Quartzhill, and Foxybrook do in England.

Drop eared working terriers with harsh red coats strictly out of working stock were bred during this period by Col. and the Hon. Mrs. Richard Hoare of London, who bought, among others, one of Podge Low's dogs. They bred the first English Champion Biffin of Beaufin, named after the small red apples introduced into Norfolk by the Huguenots and mentioned in Dicken's Christmas Carol, "Bob Cratchit took the squat and swarthy apple back to Tiny Tim." Biffin of Beaufin was owned by Mrs. E. Mainwaring who bred the first American drop ear Champion Merry of Beaufin.

In 1912 Mrs. Phyllis Fagan was given Brownie, a grand-daughter of one of Jones' dogs. All of Mrs. Fagan's dogs are descended from this little prick ear red terrier who had a black back and great hunting instincts, yet out hunting was a tender retriever. Most of today's black and tan Norwich of both ear types can be traced directly back to Brownie and her present Champion Dolly Varden is a tribute to fifty years of consistent preservation of type. Her latest export Bill Sykes came over to the Pemberton Kennels in 1966.

The breed was recognized, in England, in February 1932, largely due to the efforts of Mrs., Fagan and Mrs. Normandy Rodwell. The following July Norwich Terriers were exhibited for the first time at the Richmond Show where Brownie's grandson Smudge, a dark grizzle and tan prick ear, went Best of Breed. Smudge sired the first prick ear Champion bitch, Miss Manette, and Mrs. Rodwell's drop ear Champion Airman's Brown Smudge. The judge, Mr. E.S. Hertz, commented "A big future exists for this breed. The outstanding specimen was Smudge, carrying his six years lightly. Hats off to the sponsors of this charming breed; may their efforts bring success."

It is apparent from the early history that there was a diversity in type, size, color, coat and ear carriage, as well as a diversity of opinion among the early breeders, many unidentified. Correct color and ear carriage were constantly argued. It is almost miraculous that by 1932 the ideal Norwich was agreed to be the small low-legged dog with slightly foxy expression, hard wiry coat and the characteristics and conformation for which we strive today.

In America the early Norwich were called Jones after their breeder, Roughrider Jones. Recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1936 as the Norwich Terrier, some effort

was made to register them as Jones Terriers, but official policy would not permit naming a breed after a living person.

As the Jones Terriers became better known their outstanding attributes obtained for them a much wider circle among breeders and owners. These little red dogs are intelligent, lively and good tempered. In the 20's and 30's they were bred by Master of Foxhounds from Millbrook to Virginia. Periodically, fresh blood was introduced from England. M.F.H. attracted to the Jones Terriers were Eugene Reynal, who owned a famous black and tan pair near Millbrook; Sterling Larrabee, Master of the Old Dominion in Virginia; and Plunket Stewart, Master of the Cheshire Hounds near Philadelphia. Ambrose Clark, another well-known American horseman, was also a patron of Roughrider Jones and Jock Whitney developed his Green Tree Terriers from imported stock.

The Robert Strawbridges and Willum Jones went to Aiken in the winter. It was there that J. Watson Webb first saw this famous Jones Terrier and decided to cross him with some of his dogs. Mr. Webb's Shelburne terriers are well known. Gordon Massey, Henry Bixby, Harry Peters, Jr. and Mrs. A.T. McLean all played a prominent part in developing this breed before recognition.

All Norwich breeders are indebted to the late G. Gordon Massey, the first person to register a Norwich Terrier, Witherslack Sport, with the AKC in 1936. Mr. Massey had a real knowledge and love of dogs and horses. He died this spring in his 90th year, at Howell's Point, his Choptank River farm on Maryland's Eastern Shore where he lived with Mrs. Massey and his Norwich, Borders and Dachshunds. "G" Massey's many friends enjoyed his keen sense of humor and have happy memories of this tall, handsome man descending his staircase, accompanied by an avalanche of Norwich Terriers, including Wise Child, March Hare, Copper Coin and Lucky Penny.

It was owing to the efforts of Gordon Massey and Henry Bixby that the American Kennel Club, as of February 20, 1936, accepted for recognition as a breed the Norwich Terrier.