

The Early Years

Many breeds have a detailed history of their breed's arrival in America. The Affenpinscher is not so fortunate. All we have is a tantalizing article published in the April 1950 issue of the AKC GAZETTE that says the breed was imported in the mid-thirties and wide coverage was given to the event in the rotogravure sections of the newspapers and in the newsreels of the day.

We do know that Mrs. Bessie Mally of Cicero, Illinois imported at least a pair of Affenpinschers in 1935. One bitch was bred in Germany and whelped her litter in the USA on June 12, 1935, which would mean she had brought the dogs in after the second week of April and before the June whelping date. The dam of the litter, Nolli v Anwander, had the honor of being the first Affenpinscher registered with the AKC.

Any "new" breed brought into this country today must undergo quite an ordeal before AKC recognition is granted. This was not the case in 1936 when the Affenpinscher was first recognized. According to AKC records, there was no breed club. The breed was recognized through some very persistent efforts by Bessie Mally. It must be remembered that in 1936 the AKC only registered a total of 84,475 dogs in 100 breeds.

While little is known about Mrs. Mally, there are a few things that we can deduce about her from that period. Judging from the registration statistics, purebred dog ownership was not common. There was a 20.7% unemployment rate at that time. One did not go to Europe on an airplane tourist class like we do now. The only way to travel was by ocean liners. Our Mrs. Mally had to be a woman of wealth and influence to accomplish what she did.

Of course, she was not the only individual to bring in dogs. Mrs. Honore Palmer and Carle T. Parsons each brought in a dog. Mrs. Mally was the only one to do any breeding with the exception of one litter produced by Evalyn Walsh McLean out of Mrs. Mally's stock. All the dogs bred by Mrs. Mally were sired by Osko v. d. Franziskusklause. The McLean puppies were double Osko grandchildren.

With the onset of WWII, breeding came to an end. The last litter registered was whelped June 24, 1940. Absolutely nothing was bred for the next nine years. The breed's progress in America came to a screeching halt, though it is not clear why. Mrs. Mally was the driving force behind the breed. Perhaps something happened to her or she lost interest in the breed because the war prevented further importations which were necessary to expand her bloodline.

The FIFTIES

After the war, Mrs. Evelyn Brody began importing Affenpinschers again. The AKC records show that none of the dogs from the 1930's were ever bred to these new imports. Mrs. Mally's Zwergteufel line simply died out. This was a great loss for the Affenpinscher in America. The early 1950's turned out to be a period of rebuilding the breed from the ground up. The breeders here turned to Germany and imported dogs from some of the same breeders that had bred Mrs. Mally's dogs of the 30's. The dogs that restarted the breed in the 1950's came from Maria Anwander (von Anwander), Anna Katzbichler (Franziskusklause), Ilsa Kospinger (von Regental), Josi Greimel (von Waldteufel), Joseph Geiger (von Illertal) and Willibald Aumuller (Aumuhle). The dogs that started the breed in the United States in 1935 came from Josi Greimel, Sixtus Anwander, and Anna Katzbichler. Even though the original stock from the 30's died out, the breeders of the early 50's were able to bring back some blood from those lines. In a search through the German stud book, it can be seen that the breeders of the dogs that came to America in the 50's, often bred to each others dogs. In a number of the early pedigrees, it's not surprising to find the names of Geri v Fechenheim or Burschel v Waldteufel. The first postwar litter was bred under Mrs. Brody's Cedarlawn prefix in 1949. For several years she continued to import dogs and breed her own stock.

Interest in the breed grew slowly during those early years. Other individuals who became active in the breed included Mrs. J. Coleman Scal and Mrs. Walter Kauffmann. Both were actively importing and breeding.

Ch. Bub v Anwander, owned by Evelyn Brody and bred by Maria Anwander, became the breed's first American champion. He made additional breed history by placing in the Toy Group at Rockford, Illinois in 1949. It would be twenty-nine years before an Affenpinscher would be named Best in Show.

In the early 50's, Evelyn Brody (Cedarlawn) and Mrs. Walter Kauffmann (Walhof) were the dominant breeders. As the 50's progressed, several other breeders came on the scene. Arthur and Mary Harrington (Aff-Airn) took over where Mrs. Brody left off. Mrs. Kauffmann, assisted by her daughters Helga and Louisa, continued to be an important breeder and exhibitor. Mrs. Kauffmann helped maintain a gene pool of Affenpinschers of colors other than black. Ch. Walhof Ivy might have possibly been the first black and tan Affenpinscher to have group placings.

Registration statistics for the breed during those years are particularly frightening. From 1954 to 1959 the registrations varied from 45 to 64 in a good year. From 1960 to 1964 the registrations hovered around 35. However, at that same time, more and more people started to notice the Affenpinscher. A number of people got started in the breed during that low registration period and by 1965 the registrations were up again. The appearance of an Affenpinscher puppy on the cover of THIS WEEK magazine newspaper supplement on June 25, 1966 gave the breed a much needed boost. The little cover dog went on to become Ch. Aff-Airn A Go Go Kins.

Affenpinschers were started in obedience in the mid Fifties. Unfortunately, there were only a few people with any interest in the obedience aspect of showing Affenpinschers. The first CD Affenpinscher was Walhof Quita CD, owned and bred by Mrs. Walter Kauffmann, who acquired her title in November 1954. It was a long dry spell until Clyzett's Tausch gained a CDX in 1968. Twelve years later, in September 1980, an Affenpinscher gained the coveted UD. Vicki Hart Schlierer trained and showed Ch. Me Own TG's Smoke Signal U.D. He was her first obedience dog.