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### BASENJI CLUB HISTORY

Mary Phemister

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...By 1942 there had been a number of Basenji imports from Africa, Canada and England and they in turn, had produced Basenjies who went all over the country and into Canada. Each owner was very enthusiastic over the breed and the most natural thing in the world was they wanted recognition of the breed from the American Kennel Club. Because Mr. Phemister had been a breeder of some years standing, he undertook this job - with the approbation and urging of other Basenji owners. With Mr. Phemister serving as President of the newly formed Basenji Club of America, were Vice Presidents Miss Ethelwyn Harrison of Euclid, Ohio, and Miss Eloise Gerry of Madison, Wisconsin; Treasurer Mr. George L. Gilkey of Merrill, Wisconsin, and Secretary Mr. George E. Richards of Lynn, Massachusetts. Bylaws and breed standard were prepared and accepted by the Club Membership, the standard being an exact copy of the Basenji Standard of the Basenji Club of Great Britain. These were later accepted by A.K.C. The next important step was to apply to AKC for registration in the stud book. Here is where all Basenji owners banded together and worked diligently to dig up the registration application of every Basenji in America and Canada. Dr. Richmond, Mr. Gilkey and Mr. Phemister bore the brunt of this undertaking but it could not have been done without the cooperation of every Basenji owner. Although a letter of June 4, 1943 from the AKC stated in part: "It was the vote that the matter of application for admission to the AKC stud book be laid over until such time as the breed grows in popularity". Yet, only 5 months later, Mr. P.B. Rice, Secretary of the AKC wrote Mr. Phemister, "I am very pleased to advise you that our Board of Directors at the meeting of November 9th, recognized for registration in the Stud Book the breed BASENJI."

This success brought forth such jubilee that immediately everyone started to work for the 100 registrations necessary to be classified in the Hound Group. This goal was attained with the arrival of the 1944 puppies and by spring of 1945, the Basenji breed was officially a member of the Hound Group. Within a period of a few weeks, 4 Basenjies made their championships: first Phemister's Melengo, followed by Mr. H. W Francis' Andy of Glen Ho and his Rwanda, then Melengo's brother, Phemister's Simba.

With the club's officers and membership functioning smoothly and efficiently, efforts were expended for a Basenji Specialty Show. However, before this could be accomplished, two AKC sanctioned shows must be held a year apart -- in several sections of the country. The first sanctioned match was held at our home here in Kingston on August 15, 1948 with an entry of 27 Basenjies. The late Mrs. Drury L. Sheraton of Hingham, Massachusetts, a well-known all-rounder judge, became the first person to judge an official Basenji show. Best in Match was Phemister's Kongwa, while Best of Opposite Sex was Phemister's Maestro. Although there were many complimentary entries, actually 14 entries competed.

The second successful sanctioned match was held at Lake Stafford, Ohio, on August 27, 1949. The well-known all-rounder Max Riddle judged this show. From an entry of 21 dogs, Best in Match was Ahmed of Blue Nile owned by Mr. L.C. Emerick. Best of Opposite Sex was Zomba of Primrose Lodge owned by Miss Helen Mettler from New York.

Having fulfilled all the obligations of the AKC concerning the management of the sanctioned shows, permission was granted the BCOA to hold its first Specialty Show.