

## The Eskimo Dog

In 1974 I judged for the first time in Canada.

My assignment included all Working breeds, and listed among these is the Eskimo Dog. In my 1935 copy of AKC's official book "Pure-Bred Dogs," there is a picture of this breed and a standard listed as (By courtesy of The Eskimo Dog Club of America), but as AKC discontinued recognition of the breed in 1959, I thought that a new standard might have been published by Canadian authorities. Accordingly I inquired about this and a reply to my letter stated that it would be unnecessary for me to have a standard as there wouldn't be any. Of the exhibitions at the Montreal shows, the most fascinating from my point of view was the one on this wonderful breed that has so closely approached the point of extinction.

Bill Carpenter had a wonderful display of this sled dog breed (including puppies), paraphernalia, equipment, literature and maps of the vast arctic area where the breed prevailed in its purity for a long time, until some of the lighter northern breeds became crossed into it. Along with a few others who had the foresight and interest to uncover and preserve this most useful member of Thule-Inuit culture, Mr Carpenter made trips into some of the remote arctic areas in order to procure pure-bred specimens as a foundation for a plan to re-establish the breed. The interview with Bill Carpenter was a most absorbing one, and one to which I would have liked to devote a great deal more time. He divulged many interesting statistics and experiences including how a seven dog team pulling 120 lbs per dog, travelled 50 to 70 miles per day over Great Slave Lake. He showed of many trips on his large size maps of the North West Territory. I felt a sense of pride in being made an honorary member of the Eskimo Dog Society of the North West Territory along with Walter Fletcher of "The New York Time".

The Eskimo Dog Project is by no means

a commercial venture. *Canis familiaris borealis* or Kingmik as he was known to the Inuit of Northern Canada is an indigenous breed of Canada, first recognised by the CKC at the time of its inception some 85 years ago. Operation of the project is carried on with the aid of a grant from the Canada Counsel, an agency of the Federal Government; by grants and donations from airlines, trading companies, dog food manufactures, medical and veterinary laboratories, business houses, local, national and territorial governments, Canadian Kennel Club, radio and television interests, civic institutions, many corporations and individuals.

When third and fourth generations have been developed and registered, they will be placed – in Inuit camps, settlements, or cultural societies who will continue to use Eskimo dogs, and perhaps some will be placed in the hands of top breeders approved by the Canadian Kennel Club.

*Dog World (America) September 1976  
from an article by Thomas M Gately*



## Greenland Dog (Gronlandshund)

Considerable difference of opinion still exists concerning the names of the arctic sledge-hauling dogs. The Alaskan Malamute and the Siberian Husky have been successfully separated in name, classification and recognition by the major canine authorities, but there is still some confusion concerning the Gronlandshund and the Eskimo Dog, some authorities still dividing the two. The FCI however recognises the Gronlandshund, whilst the Canadian Kennel Club recognises the Eskimo Dog. He is big, up to twenty-five inches at the shoulder and strong and well-built with it, his stand-off coat making him look even more massive.

As a sledge-hauling dog he played his part in the exploration of the Arctic regions, and is still used competitively in sledge races. The Eskimoes used dogs for work for centuries before mechanisation took over, and in addition to the actual hauling that he did, the Greenland dog proved to be an excellent guard, and watchdog. His coat is long and hard, and he has a thick soft undercoat which affords him protection from the weather. He is extremely hardy, capable of existing on the minimum of sustenance and out of doors in the worst weather. His colour is not considered to be an important feature, but white, grey, black and little tan in almost any proportions are acceptable. He is reserved with strangers but becomes attached to those with whom he lives.

## Eskimo Dog

The Eskimo Dog is one of the most famous working dogs in the world, but unfortunately has suffered from confusion as the result of other, smaller and less popular sledge dogs being credited with his name. The Eskimo Dog proper originated in Greenland and is the most generally useful of the hauling dogs of all the Arctic countries. He is very much part of the heritage of northern Canada, and known to the Inuit people as the 'Kingmik', he was the only breed of domestic animal known to the early Arctic peoples. He hauled sledges, carried packs and was used for hunting. He guarded the camps and property, was the plaything of the children when he was young, and whilst working hard he lived frugally and made little inroad into the limited resources of the people with whom he lived.

These dogs were first encountered by explorers who immediately found them the only answer to their transport problems. He was first written about one hundred and fifty years ago and was accepted as a separate breed by the Canadian Kennel Club before the turn of the century. Although mechanisation has restricted the absolute need for these magnificent dogs, they are still used competitively. There was at one time danger that the breed would disappear, but recent efforts to ensure its continuance are proving entirely successful. He is a large strong dog of rugged build with a weatherproof coat, and the more attractive marked ones that are appearing in the show rings of the world are gaining the breed new friends all the time. He is a very intelligent and good-natured dog.

*Glover's Standard Guide to Pure Bred Dog*

Orientation Day: Alaskan Malamute Social Club at Mt Hotham in 1987 with dogs and sleds.