

The Maine Coon Cat Breed History



A Lecture by Beth Csomay, M.A. in
English
Maine Coon Breeder, 8 Years



Lesson Plan for Jan 3rd 2024

Lesson Plan for 1/3/24 at 8PM EST-9PM EST.

Part 1, A History

– **Jan 10: Part 2, Health & Reputable Breeders**

8PM-8:10PM: Introductions/Course Materials

8:10-8:15PM: Course Materials/Lecture Notes/A Reason for This Talk For Breeders and Enthusiasts

– **Understanding the Maine Coon Cat**

8:15-8:45PM: Maine Coon History/Breed Standard/Backend of a Pedigree and Why That's Important

8:45PM-9:00PM: Maine Coon Care (enthusiasts & breeders)

9:00-9:05: Questions; After Class Wrap-Up



Why educate?

- To better understand the breed and the Maine Coon breeding programs currently active
- To ensure our breed remains healthy and true to its roots as a native American breed
- To ensure pet parents/enthusiasts of the breed become knowledgeable about what the Maine Coon Cat is and why they should prioritize purchases from a reputable program
- To understand the disservice backyard breeders (and scammers, obviously) do to our breed's future



Jan 3rd Course Outcomes

1. Will teach a basic understanding of Maine Coon Cat breed history
2. Will provide resources for further pedigree sourcing
 - i. PawPeds
 - ii. Forgotten breed articles
 - iii. Source texts
3. Will teach structure NOT color in this first overview because **good breeders build the barn before they paint it (best advice I ever received).**
4. Will answer questions directly from students in the later portion of class.



Introductions: About Us & Our Goals

The Maine Coon's history is becoming lost; the myths of origin seem to have somehow faded from cultural memory, and the identification of the breed as an American cat has given way to a large influx of European Maine Coon imports, which too share the famed American lineage. As a breed, it is important that we all know **why** we are breeding, can identify and define the goals of our genetic pairings, and comprehend the fact that we did not start a line— we have been entrusted with the future of a legacy, a legacy that began many, many decades ago—perhaps centuries—with a small population of cats in the northeastern portion of the United States, a *native* cat that was known for its beauty *and* its prowess as a mouser, a cat known for its size and its phenomenal temperament, a cat whose ancestors and progeny have continually stolen human hearts since the 1860s.



The Maine Coon Cat

- The Maine cat has become popular. With popularity, its origins have become blurred and sometimes forgotten. It is now called the Maine Coon Cat and it has become recognized internationally as a show cat and pet of the finest type. The Maine Coon Cat of today has distinct and recognizable heritage, and its ancestry are pedigree traceable to cats from the State of Maine.
- Copyright April 18, 1998 Beth E. Kus
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20031003102828/http://bowen1.home.mindspring.com/mchs/articles/maineorig.htm>



What is a Maine Coon? (Breed Standards)

Knowing breed standard helps breeders and enthusiasts identify the Maine Coon Cat. Sun O'er Sea cattery follows CFA standard, which— no offense to TICA (which favors a more feral look and a boxier muzzle)— privileges balance in features. A Maine Coon Cat should do well in either or both organizations.

GENERAL: originally a working cat, the Maine Coon Cat is solid, rugged, and can endure a harsh climate. A distinctive characteristic is its smooth, shaggy coat. A well proportioned and balanced appearance with no part of the cat being exaggerated. Quality should never be sacrificed for size. With an essentially amiable disposition, it has adapted to varied environments.



Clubs



People



Artifacts



Library



Updates



Contact

of 1895, at the Madison Square Garden, New York, in May 1895.

However, like all achievements, they must be seen in historical context. The first National Cat Show at Madison Square Garden, was not the first National Cat Show in the United States, nor was it necessarily the biggest. Boston, another east coast port city, was also a significant centre for Cat Shows and there is empirical evidence to show that this was where the first American cat shows styled as 'National Cat Shows' were held. The Boston shows of 1878 and 1880, were both styled as 'National Cat Shows' and we could endlessly debate what in fact constitutes the criteria upon which such an accolade or title is based. In the simplest terms, it is any show open to entries from the entire country, plain and simple. So, in fact, the shows from both these great cities were National Cat Shows in the simplest understanding of the term.

The same was the case in Britain, where, as one might expect, the first and subsequent cat shows to follow the Crystal Palace Show of July 1871, were likewise styled as National Cat Shows. But even as early as 1873, a show held in Birmingham was likewise styled as the "Birmingham & National Cat Show", held at the Old Wharf, Broad Street Corner¹².

Nevertheless, this does not take away from the fact that the Cat Show held at Madison Square Garden in New York, in May of 1895, is seen by most American fanciers as the most significant Show held in North America, duly considering it as a hallmark moment in a newly burgeoning Cat Fancy in the United States.

Registration: **Not applicable**
Registry: **Unregistered**
Sire: **Unknown**
Dam: **Unknown**
Br: **Unknown (Maine)**
Ow: **Mrs. Frederick A. Brown**
Breed: **Longhair (Maine Angora)**
Color: **Brown (or Silver) Tabby**
Alt Name: **Not Applicable**



Photo: Julius A. Gross; Brooklyn, New York. Courtesy of The CFA Foundation, Inc.



America's first indigenous show cat. .. (1878); Maine Coon Heritage Site

- 1861: first mention of a Maine Coon Cat; Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines; followed by Cosey
- *Mrs. Pierce' first cat owned in 1861 by her brother and herself was a Maine cat named "Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines." This cat she describes as one of the "long-haired cats of that variety often called Maine cats..... their advent reaches far back beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant." It is clear from this comment that Mrs. Pierce had questioned elderly relatives and friends about their Maine cats, and had listened to tales of Maine cats in her girlhood years. Her comment "...I have been writing of the cats of long, long ago," authenticates historically the presence of a recognizable type of cat, known as Maine cats, as present in Maine well before the Civil War era in 1861; well before her own cat "Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines."*
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20031003102828/http://bowen1.home.mindspring.com/mchs/articles/maineorig.htm>)
- The Maine Coon Cat is America's first indigenous show cat. A dozen of these down-east, working class heroes were listed in the program of a show held in Boston in January 1878. Often called the "gentle giants" of the cat fancy, the Maine Coon Cat's origins are shrouded in the mists of time and the legends told by their owners.



An artistic representation of the Turkish Angora?

No. Angora is a term for longhair cats of Eurasian descent, not the Turkish Angora breed.

“Although it is clearly stated that the basis for the 'Angora' cat is root stock coming from 'Angora' in Asia Minor, an area also famous for its goats; a study of newspaper advertising from this same period shows that by far the vast majority of feline root stock for the many cat farms based in the North-eastern corner of United States, came from Maine.

- In time, they became known colloquially as "Maine" Angora's, then later as Maine Cats, and eventually, once a recognised style had emerged, as Maine Coons. (<https://cat-o-pedia.org/cosey.html>)
- Most breeders today believe that the breed originated in matings between preexisting shorthaired domestic cats and overseas longhairs (perhaps Angora types introduced by New England seamen, or longhairs brought to America by the Vikings (Simpson))



Simpson's "The Maine Coon: America's Native Longhair"

Maine Coons were well established more than a century ago as a hardy, handsome breed of domestic cat, well equipped to survive the hostile New England winters. Nature is not soft-hearted. It selects the biggest, the brightest, the best fighters, and the best hunters to breed successive generations. Since planned breedings of Maine Coons are relatively recent and carefully monitored, these cats still have their strong, natural qualities. **Maine Coons are healthy, disease-resistant, rugged cats.** Interestingly, the breed closest to the Maine Coon is the Norwegian Forest Cat which, although geographically distant, evolved in much the same climate, and lends credence to the theory that some of the cats responsible for developing the Maine Coon were brought over by the Vikings.

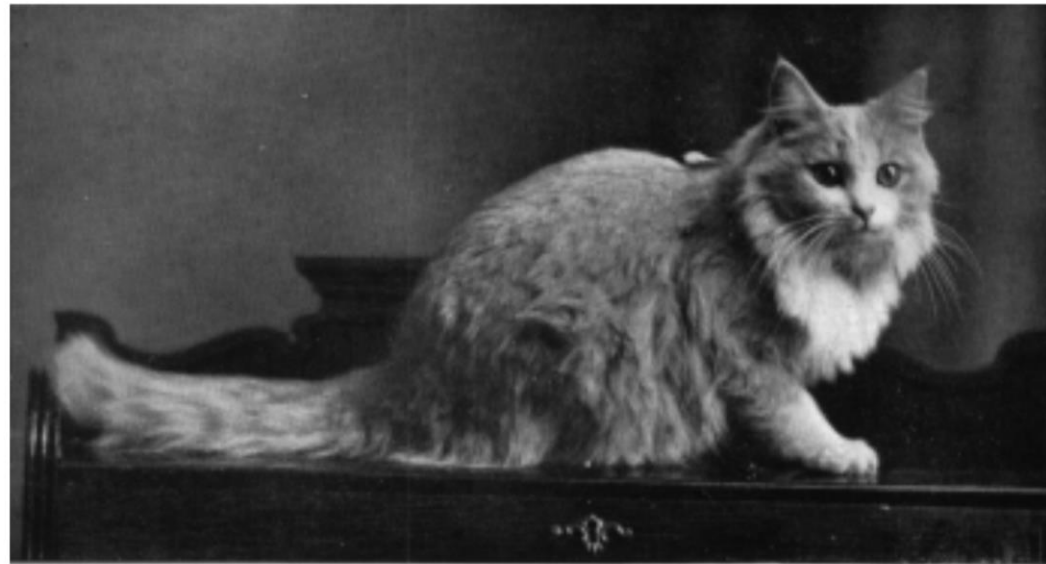


Hornidge's *The Yankee Cat*


- The theory of survival of the fittest by natural selection is plain old general science and makes a lot of sense but no emotional ripples. It goes so: the Maine Coon is the result of nature working on a wide genetic pool on the North American continent with little to no interference from the heavy hand of man.
- By the 1860s . . . The Maine Coon (which was then known as a ‘coon,’ a ‘shag,’ or a ‘snughead,’ the derivation of the latter having been irretrievably lost was prized as a top-notch mouser and barn cat; but it was also, when forcibly curried into neatness, a regal, handsome, and impressively large figure of a cat.

1903– The Maine Cats

From my earliest recollection I have had from one to several long-haired cats of that variety often called Maine cats. As to how and when they came, I would say, like Topsy, they just "grewed," for their advent reaches far back beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant.



"TOBEY," A MAINE TRICK CAT.
OWNED BY MISS CHAPLE.



If reading lines, these names are good to recognize...

Past

Since the 1960's Maine Coons have become increasingly popular, throughout the United States and all over the world. Recognition of the breed was first given by the Canadian Cat Association and the American Cat Association in 1967. Other registries soon followed suit, except for CFA, which waited until 1976.

Some of the earliest Maine Coon Catteries include:

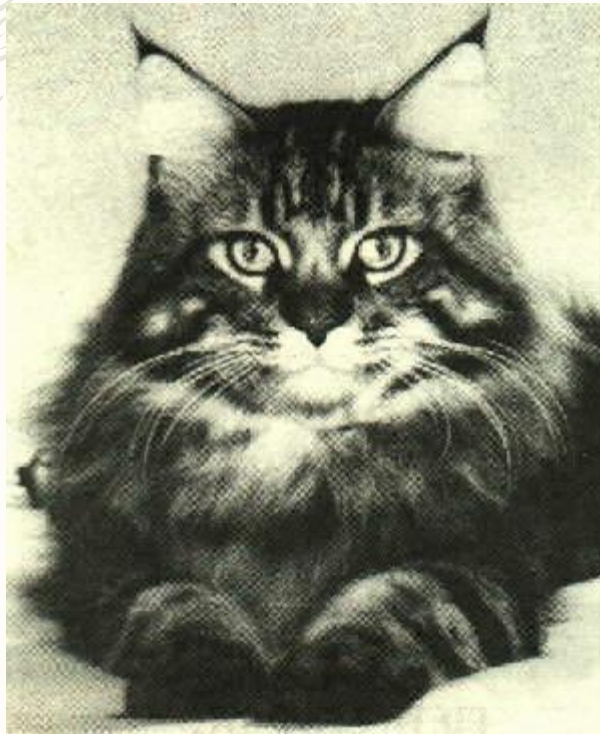
- Abnaki - Liz Bicknell
- Havenwood - Patricia McIntire
- Heidi Ho - Connie Condit
- Highmeadow and Kent - Diane Ziessow
- Illya - George Andre
- Jo Stad - Rod & Betty Ljostad
- Le Beau Minu/Mountview - Carol & Tom Pedley
- Mor-Ace - Anthony Morace
- Norwynde - Lillias Vanderhoff
- Quan Yin - Cynthia Wilson
- Sundar - Phyllis Voth
- Tanstaaf - Beth Hicks
- Tati-Tan - Sonya Stanislow
- War-Tell - Florence Wartell
- Whittemore - Ethelyn Whittemore
- Woods End/Woodriver - Diane Reynolds
- Yankee Cats - Judith Ansell



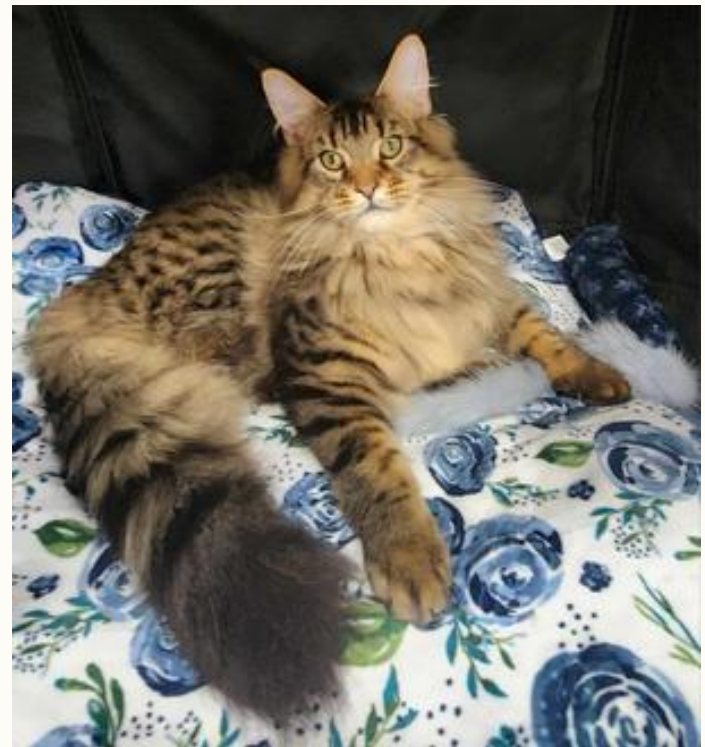
Segway to Breed Standard

- CFA Maine Coon Standard/TICA Maine Coon Standard
- There are other organizations but these two are the main ones in the United States.
- **CFA Maine Coon Standard**
- **TICA Maine Coon Standard**

Research the Back-end of the Pedigree & Compare



**Willowplace Starbuck
6/2/1985 (US/US)**



**Sun O'er Sea's Sir Anthony
Bridgerton; 1/24/2023; (US/US)**