

The origin of the Newfoundland dog

By Birgitte Gothen



1979

About me



1981

- Owned Newfoundlands since I was a teenager. My first dog was born in 1958 out of Danish/Swedish family. She was named ”URSULA” - in Latin: Little female bear. This became my prefix for my breeding. I used to keep 8 - 10 dogs, who were part of the family.
- Due to our wonderful breed, I have had so many friends and adventures from many countries during the years, and I’m very glad to be here today!

- **Newfoundland is one of the Canadian Maritime provinces and consists of the large island of Newfoundland to the far East in the Atlantic along with the peninsula Labrador.**



The climate has the maritime temperature of 0 degrees. Summer days range from cool to hot with a temperature to 16 degrees.

The Island of which our beloved breed is named.

Many breeders have chosen names from the island for their prefix:

Helluland,

Ferryland,

Bonavista,

Pinquin Bay,

Twillingate,

Pouch Cove

and more.



A load of timber drawn by newfs in Yukon



The newfoundland dog, original breed, 1843.
Import from Newfoundland



- The Newfoundland dog - as we know it today - probably did not originate from the island.
- There is a considerable evidence that the North American Indians bred their dogs to wolves. The resulting progeny improved in size and with thick, weather resisting coats, were highly prized as draught animals, pulling loads through the snow in winter and back packing in the summer season

The Beotuck Indians and the vikings

- First humans to inhabit Newfoundland.
- Gentle people who were discovered by living and working with great, bearlike, black dogs.
- Newfoundland was settled by Viking explores, who reached the island in about year 1000.
- Leif Ericson led the first expedition, carried with him a variety of domestic animals, including a “Large Black Dog”.
- It’s possible that they left behind a few of their dogs. After the departure of the Vikings, the island was left unexplored for about four hundred years.



The Europeans

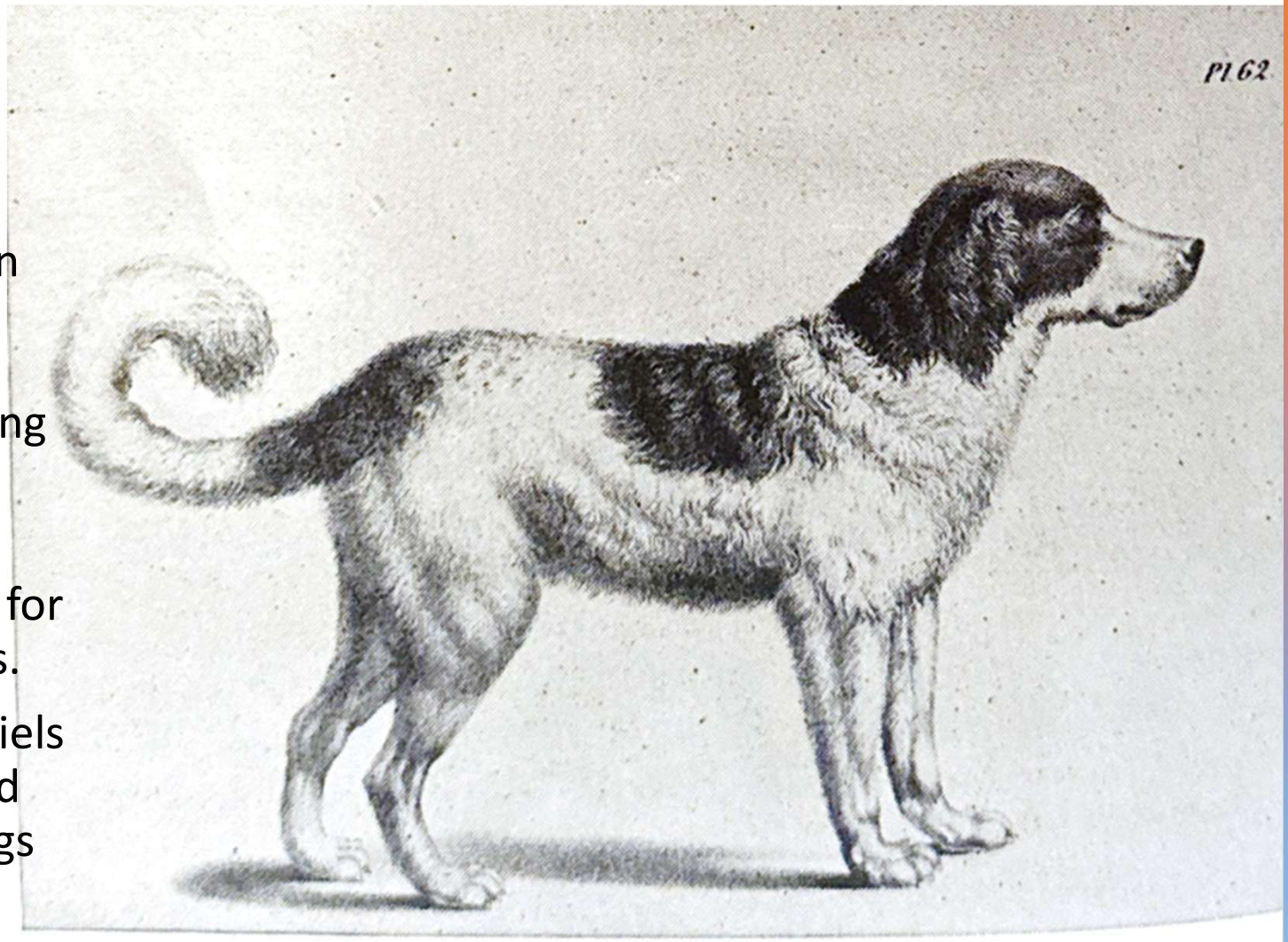
- In 1497 Newfoundland was re-discovered by John Cabot, Italian explorer.
- Followed by sailors and explorers due to the rich natural assets such as timber, minerals, while the surrounding sea held numerous of seals and fish.
- Early writers describe the native dogs in general being of medium to small size. Similar to the Greenland Eskimo dogs and usually black or black and white.



GREENLAND DOG
from Scott's *Sportsman's Repository* (1820)

The Europeans

- Sailors from western European seaboard, from Spain to Scandinavia, went to Newfoundland by the beginning of the 16th Century.
- Brought their dogs on board, either as ship's dogs or to use for hunting and draught purposes.
- Portuguese Water Dogs, Spaniels from Spain, from Britain would have come Mastiffs, Sheepdogs and Spaniels.



NEWFOUNDLAND DOG
from German drawing of same period

- All these breeds must have combined with the local Indian dogs to produce the dog known as the Newfoundland dog.
- The island Newfoundland is very large and the communities were isolated which resulted in local variations.
- The white and black – the Landseer – mostly came from the main island.



Billy, 1848

- Popular in the newly adopted home in England,
- But on the home island the dogs were having trouble even surviving.
- Exported in quantity
- Governor Edwards issued in 1780 a proclamation forbidding ownership of more than one dog per family.
- The reason behind this was to promote sheep raising.
- Probably the only thing that saved the Newfoundland from complete extinction in his homeland was the fact that many inhabitants resisted the proclamation because they felt that he was simply too useful to shoot!

English newfoundland from 1860



- In winter the dogs were used for hauling sledges and the fish nets during the warmer months.
- Many Newfoundlands more than paid for their keep by diving to retrieve articles which fell overboard from the fishing vessels.
- Later the Newfoundland was used to pull sledges with post and when the first stamp was issued in Newfoundland in 1887, the head of the Landseer Watch was used as a model.



- In 1937 when king Georg VI was crowned, a stamp was issued showing the king and the black Westerland Sieger, which belonged to the breeder Harold Macpherson.

- For as long as the Newfoundland has been recognized as a distinct breed, there has been speculations about the difference between the black and the white-and black varieties. Both are undoubtedly Newfoundlands with the same basic characteristics.
- A hundred years ago the differences were more obvious, but shortage of bloodlines have forced them to come together, resulting in much greater uniformity.
- It seems likely that imports of large shepherds dogs, Pyreneans Mastiff or even English Mastiffs to the main part of the Island resulted in the development of a parti coloured dog.
- The curly coats of some early Newfoundlands may well indicate a distant relationship to the Great Rough Waterdog.



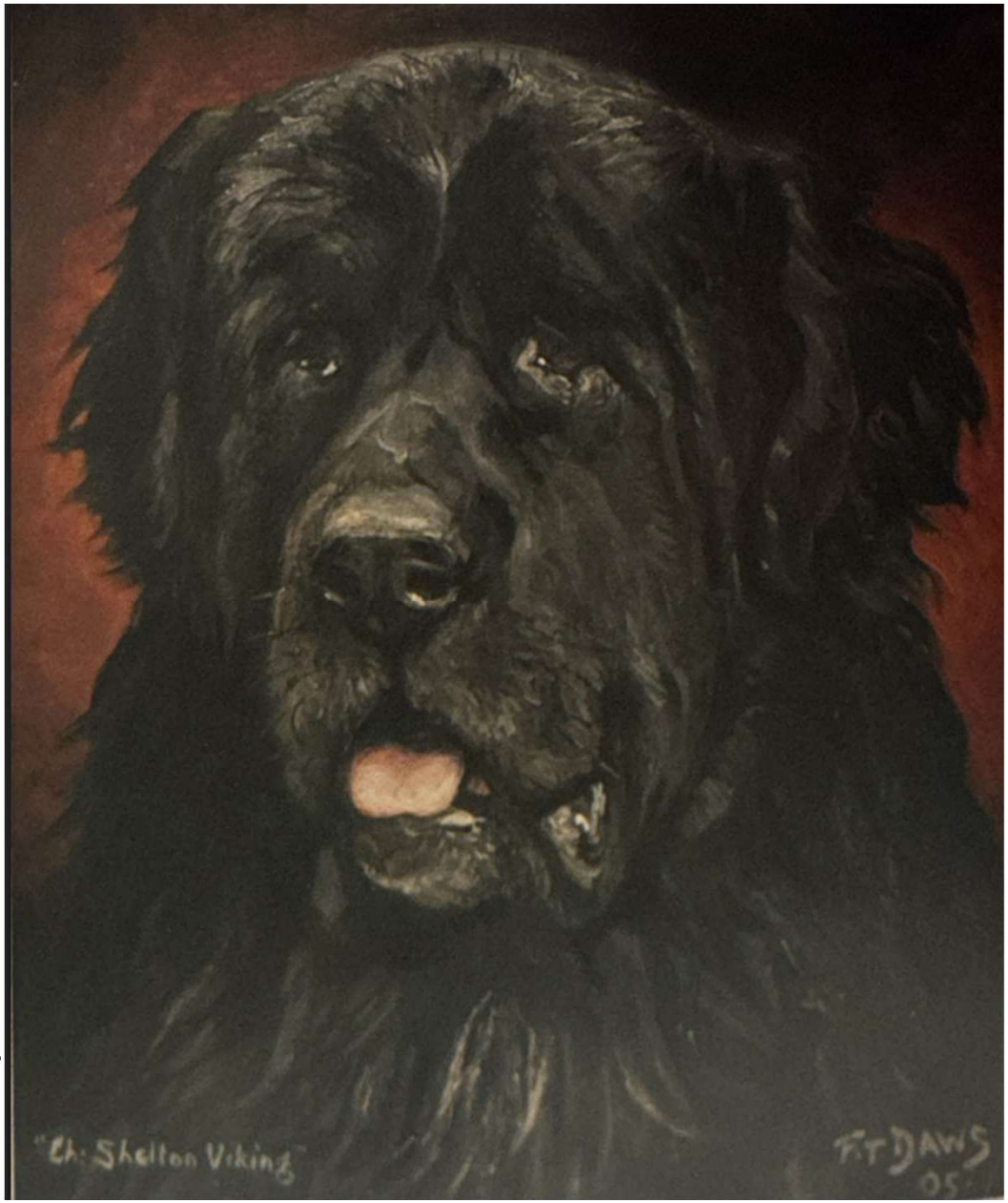
Harold Macpherson



- The black and white variety was often taller with less coat, and the Swiss breeder, Emil Burkhard, claimed that it was another breed.
- A small number of continental Newfoundland breeders decided to recreate what they believed to be the original and correct Newfoundland.
- Their blueprint was the paintings of the white and black dogs by Sir Edwin Landseer. Interest in the project was confirmed mainly to breeders in Switzerland, Germany and Austria.
- In 1960 it was granted independent status as a distinct breed and the name of European Continental Type Landseer.

England

- It’s not known when the first Newfoundland came to England. The trade of Newfoundlands started in Poole and Bristol, later spreading to Hull, Dundee and other ports.
- Poole has had a very special relationship with Newfoundland for more than four hundred years due to the trade with timber. Many ship masters soon realized they could make a useful side-line out of bringing dogs back to Britain.



Shelton Viking, born 1903.
32 offspring



Ch Shelton Viking, owned by Mrs Wetwan

photo:

- Besides that, the traders of Poole soon found the solution to the towns traffic problems. The narrow, winding lanes were not wide enough to allow horses carts access, and dog carts made useful alternative. The usual sight in the Poole was the dog cart.
- The Newfoundland dogs were considered the best dogs for this, and Poole was the center for such dogs.
- They were harnessed and pulled domestic items as well as fresh fish along the South Coast. One of the streets in Poole is named Newfoundland Drive!

- Early Newfoundland breeding appears to have been unregulated and there are few records of pedigrees. The first proper show was held at Birmingham in 1860, but the records of the dogs shown are not always correct since the dogs often changed owners and names. Kennel Club registrations started in 1875 and the situation improved.

- A well known breeder and exhibitor, Henry Farquharson, wrote in 1882: “It is well known by old owners of Newfoundlands that the more common colour of imported dogs was black and white or bronze or even grey and white and four white feet. A white tip to the tail, a large white breast and frequently white on the head, were the usual markings of a dogs imported from Newfoundland fifty years ago”.



The Newfoundland Club

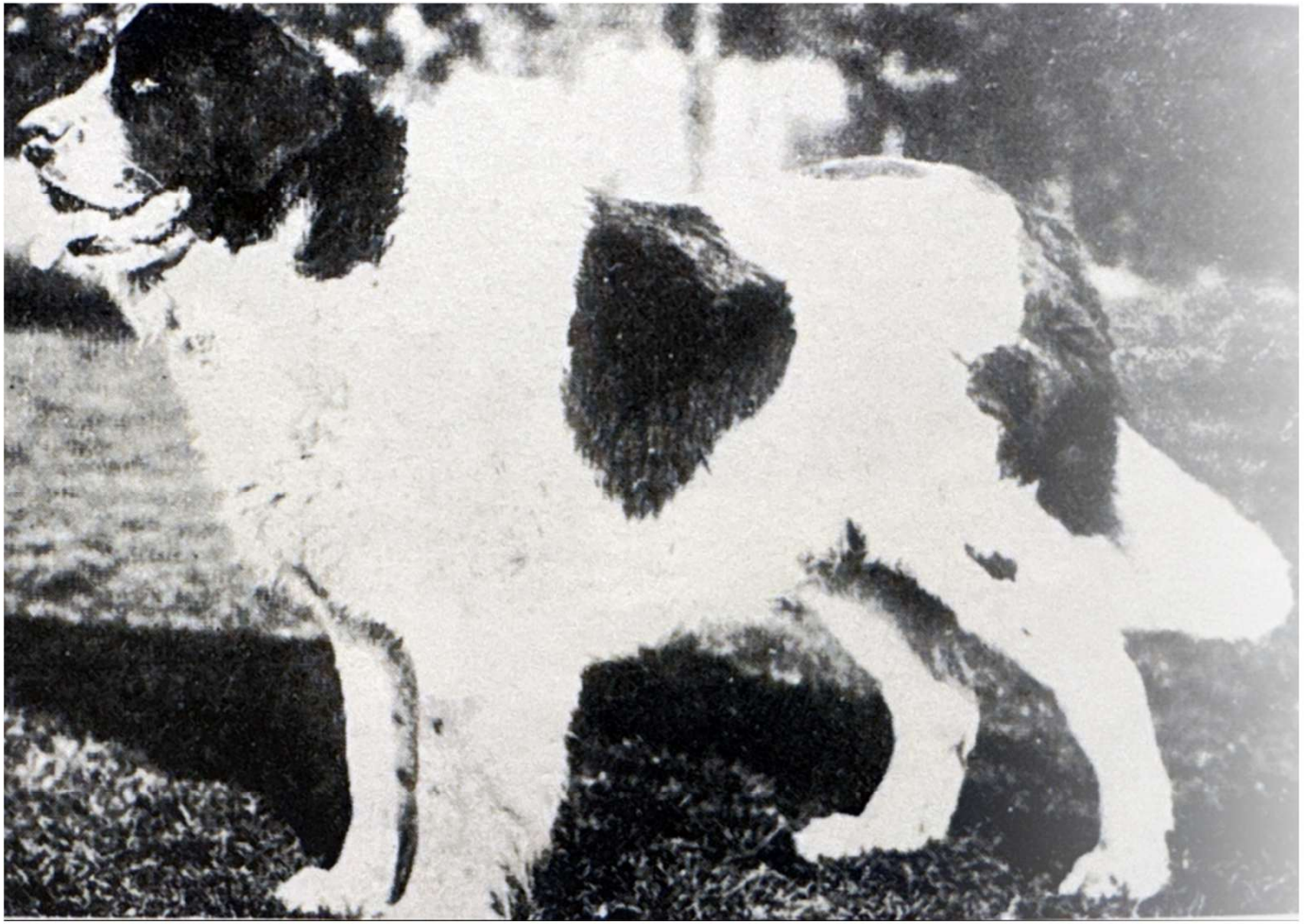
- Founded in 1886 by four English gentlemen.
- One of them was Mr William van Oppen from Holland and bred under the prefix Harlingen, named after the Dutch town. His daughter, May van Oppen, later Mrs Roberts, continued the breeding and bred many important dogs, sent to American breeders.
- The standard was issued and it was adopted by other countries and with a few alterations. It is still the same recognized by the FCI.

BIS Crufts 1908: Gipsy Duke, born 1906. 46 offspring



- The colour brown was added to the English standard in 1974 and is in the FCI standard.
- The Canadian Newfoundland Club had discussions some year ago about adopting the brown in their standard, but they did not want neither brown nor grey, the latter only being allowed in the USA.
- Several of the imported dogs from Newfoundland produced brown Newfoundlands.

Miss May van Oppen, Harlingen



Prince of Norfolk, born 1897.
14 offspring

- Early breeders were concerned not only to standardize the Newfoundland colours and general appearance but also to define and stabilize the type and character of the dogs - never losing sight of the original purpose.

Thus, the Newfoundland was to be powerful and free from any exaggerations, which would render him unfit to work as a water and draught dog.

- It was referred specially to the “rolling gate” while on shore, suggesting that it indicated a dog shaped and capable of moving in the water easily.
- Also, the heads should not be long and narrow lacking a projecting eyebrow, which should protect the eyes when swimming in rough water.



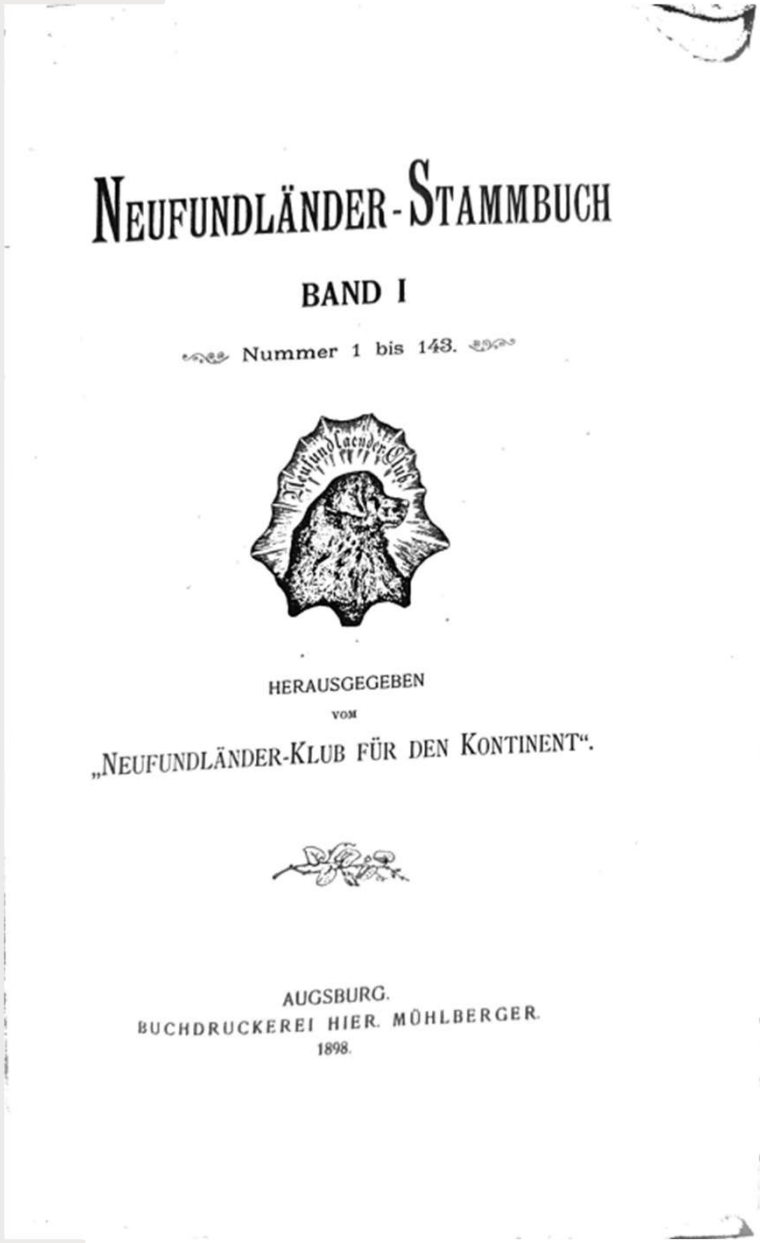
Germany

- The breeding in Germany was entirely based on dogs from England. Many imports born in the 1880'ies were the beginning for several breeders and in 1893 the gentleman Max Hartenstein founded "Neufundländer - Klub für den Kontinent".
- In1895 were 17 litters born followed by 19 litters in 1896 and the English standard for the breed was adopted. 41 litters were born in 1897.



Ch Siki. Most important stud. Offspring in USA

- The club kept files of all dogs entered from the beginning. The first books were beautiful editions with description of each dog started in 1898. Colours like black and tan, brown and grey appeared in the litters.



NEUFUNDLÄNDER-STAMMBUCH

BAND I

Nummer 1 bis 143.

HERAUSGEGEBEN

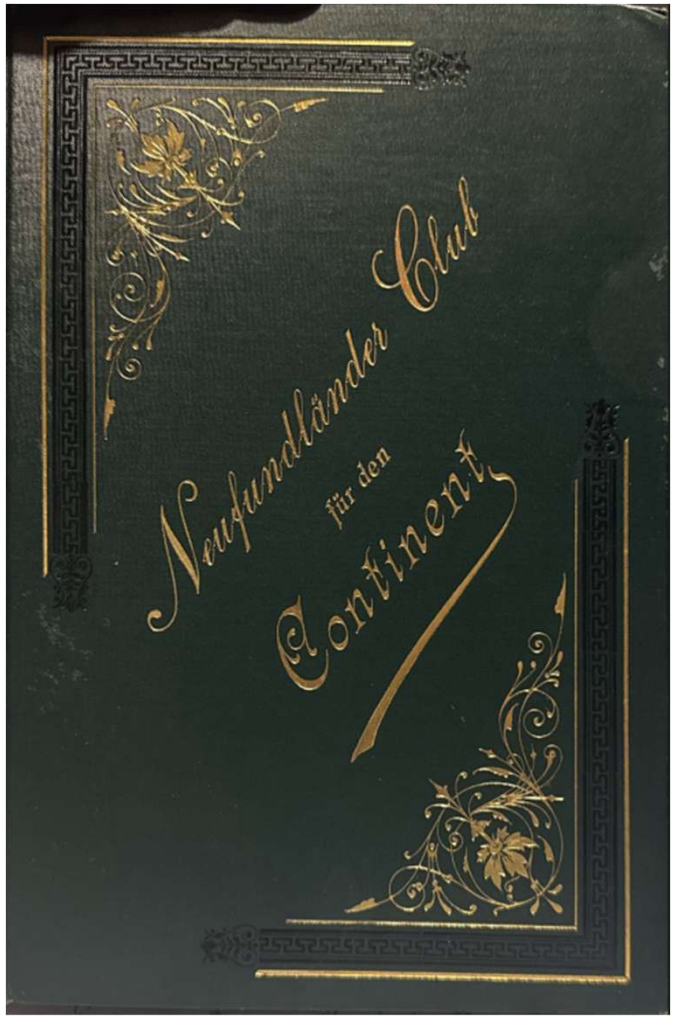
VOM

„NEUFUNDLÄNDER-KLUB FÜR DEN KONTINENT".

AUGSBURG.

BUCHDRUCKEREI HIER. MÜHLBERGER.

1898.



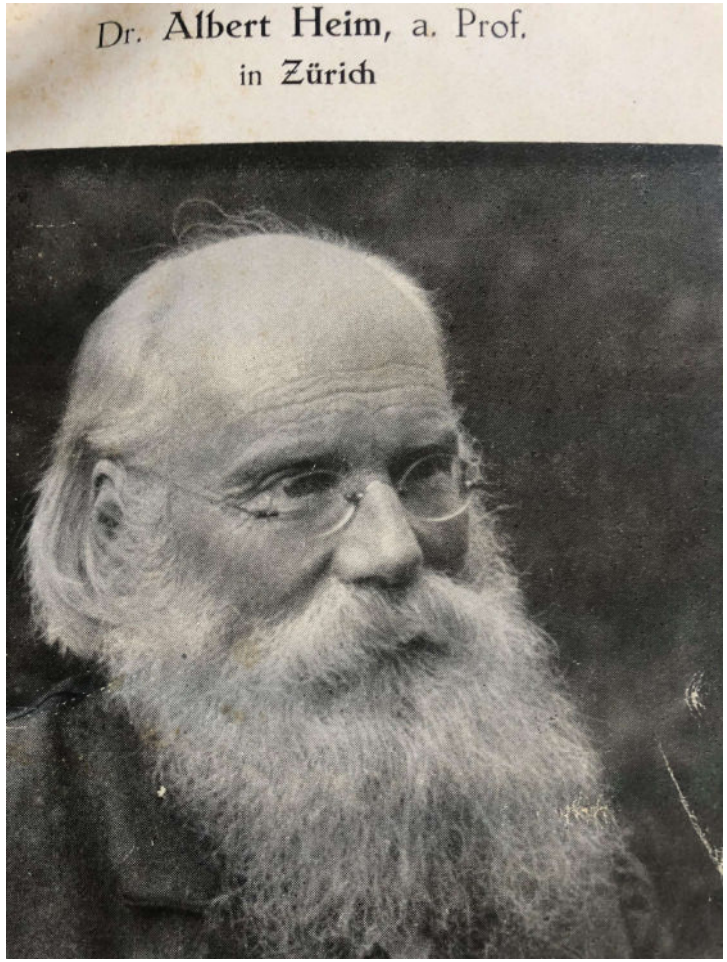
German pedigree book. The first register of pedigrees was published in 1898.

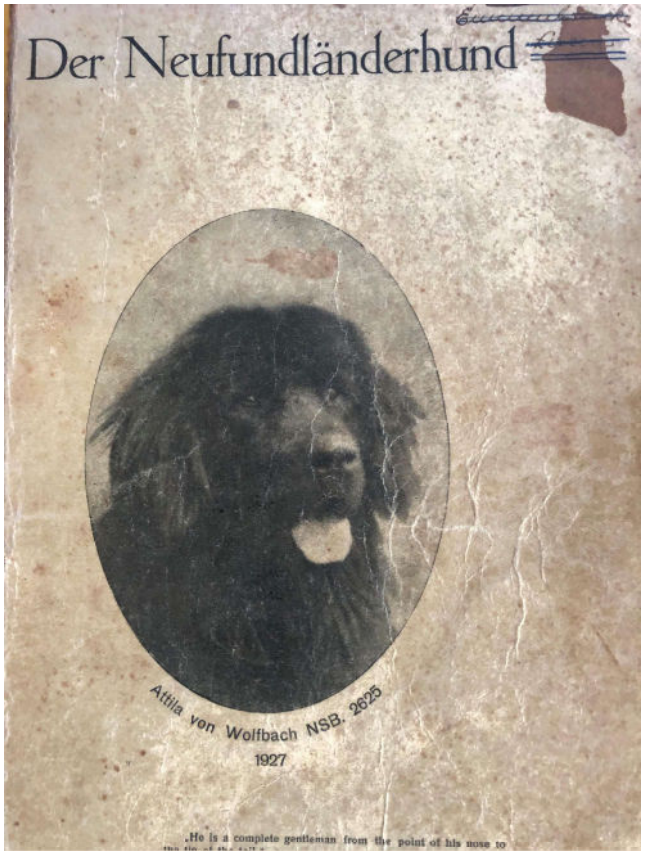
Switzerland

In Switzerland the breed became popular as well, and Professor Albert Heim bred several good dogs.

He was the editor of the first book written on the breed

“Der Neufundländerhund”.





The very first breed book issued in 1927
by Albert Heim.

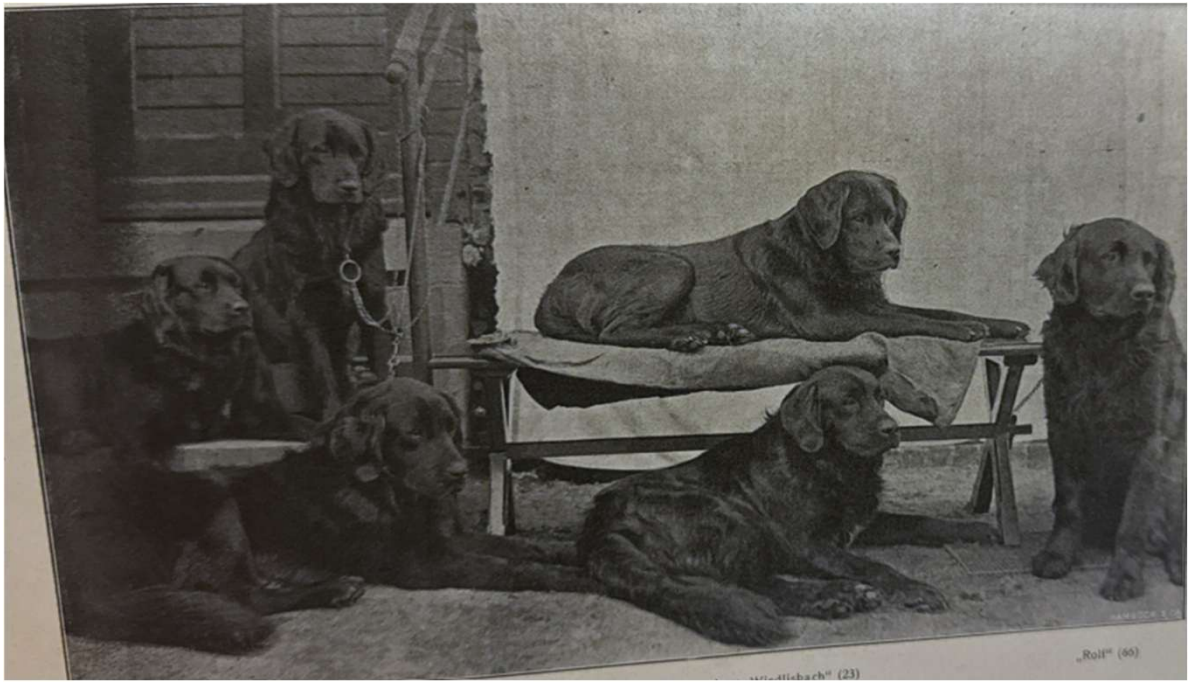
Breeders

Mr Silbermann in Augsburg
with a litter of newfoundlands





Dr. with his wife with four English imports



„Rolf“ (60)

Fram-Fram

German newfoundland exported to Switzerland. Born 1896



A distinguished member of the Humane Society by Sir Edwin Landseer

- The famous English painter featured white and black Newfoundlands in many of his works.
- “A Distinguished Member” became one of Landseer’s most iconic works. The picture was commissioned by the Humane Society to commemorate the achievements of a Newfoundland named Bob, which had saved at least 23 people from drowning in the Thames
- The dog, who was believed to be a stray dog, became something of a London hero.
- The oil painting was made in year 1831.



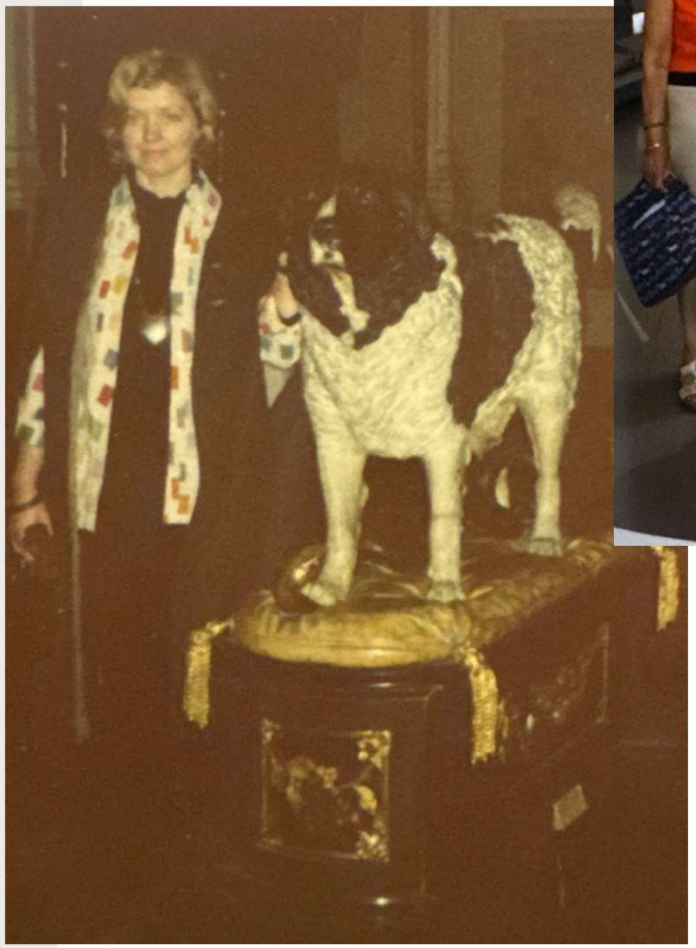


Lord Byron's memorial of Boatswain

Lord Byron's emotional tribute to his beloved "Boatswain"is engraved on the impressive monument at Newstead Abbey. Byron is the most famous man to have both owned and written about a Newfoundland. His Boatswain was born in Newfoundland in 1803.

An early example of a sculptured Newfoundland can be seen in The Victoria And Albert Museum in London.

“Bashaw” was made by Mattew Wyatt in 1830. He was brief to create a life -size statue of the dog belonging to Lord Dudley. After more than 40 sessions at Wyatt’s studio, when the dog was taken by Lord Dudley’s coachman to pose for the artist. The result was impressive. Made of black and white marble, the dog is remarkably life-like. His role as protector is emphasized by the addition of a bronze snake.

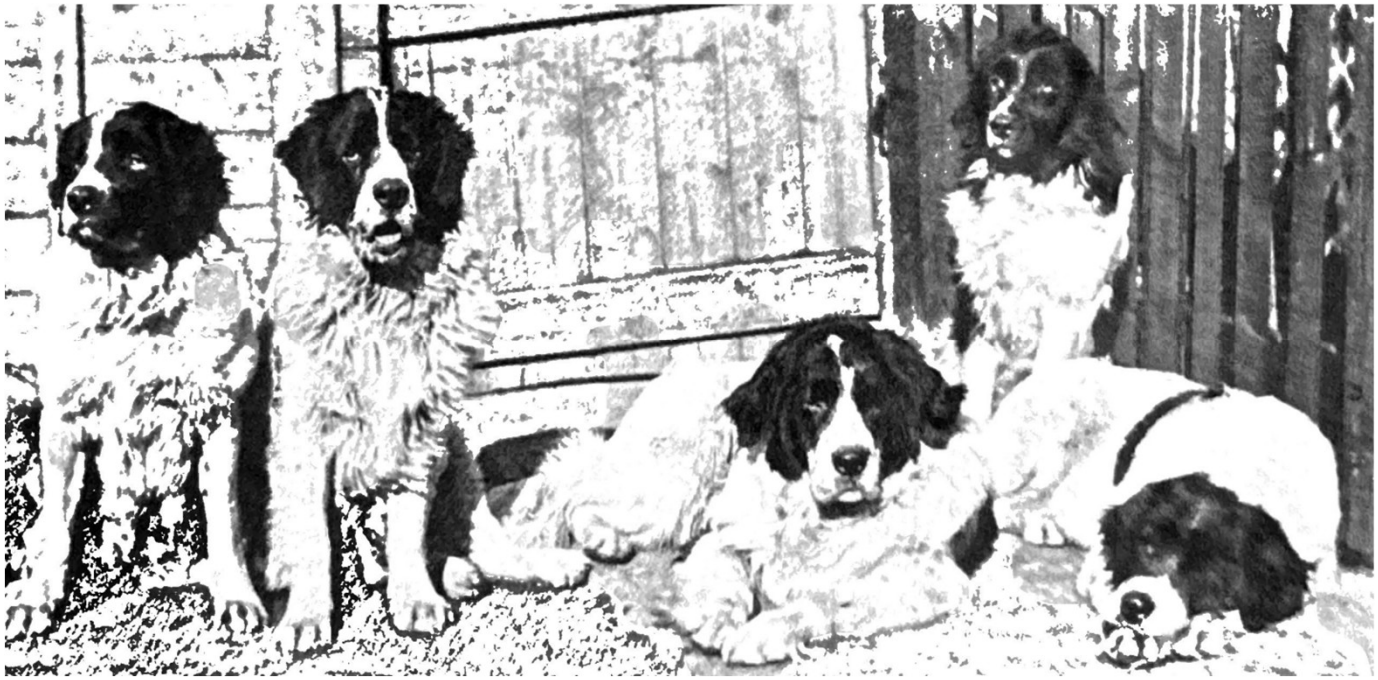




Birgitte watching the sculpture in 1978 and in 2017

The beginning of the breeding

- The English dogs were the foundation for the breeding in Germany, Holland, Switzerland and America. In Switzerland some dogs imported from Newfoundland were added.
- In the 1920'ies Betty Berg in Sweden founded her kennel Helluland. The dogs here were based on the Danish dogs coming from Germany. Later, she imported the dog Harlingen Black Pete from England, who was a son of the Landseer Black And White, and dogs from Germany.
- In America the Waseeka kennels imported Harlingen Jess, Harlingen Neptune and Harlingen Viking, they were lovely dogs and a wonderful base for the breeding.
- The Waseeka Newfoundlands together with the Oquaga Newfoundlands were the basic for the Dryad's and the Little Bear's and later for the famous Pouch Cove Newfoundlands.



Five dogs from the English
kennel Kettering

Thank you for the attention!

Who wants to go to Newfoundland? ☺

