

Roots of The Field Trial “Hunting” Beagle

Jim Lane – Laneline Beagles

The British Isles offer the oldest historical records of the breed and it is from England that the Beagles of the United States trace their origins. The first documented importation of Beagles was by General Richard Rowett of Carlinville, Illinois and occurred in the 1870's. General Rowett developed a strain that would take his name and serve as foundation stock for Pottinger Dorsey of Newmarket, New Jersey and **C. Staley Doub** of Frederick, Maryland. Doub was born on the 8th of June 1853, Son of William H and Marietta Staley Doub. He was born in the family home, a large red brick mansion house on the Southeast corner of Market and Fourth Streets, Frederick County, Maryland. He died in this same house on the 14th of August 1933 following a heart attack. He never married and outlived his sister with whom he lived. Staley worked as a clerk in Buzzy Winebrener's Wholesale Dry Goods and Grocery Store. He also owned a farm some miles out of town for which he had a tenant. With respect to the tenant he did not hunt on the farm. Not a rich man, he was only able to retire and hunt his Beagles in peace. After WW I Staley Doub hunted his open marked pack three times a week, he would hunt all day. The hounds traveled to the hunt site in his Dayton Wagon pulled by old Joe, his favorite horse, steady but slow. The males in one crate and the females in another. He used to carry a notebook and make occasional notes of how each dog was hunting, while he continually smoked his corncob pipe. There is an amusing story about 'Old Joe'. It seems he was owned by Buzzy Winebrener, from the store. Staley liked Joe and asked to buy him. It was agreed that Staley would take the horse on a trial basis and if found suitable he would buy him. This situation of Staley trying out the horse went on for 10 years, then he phoned Buzzy to say he wasn't happy with Joe and asked him if he would come and get him. "What is it you do not like about the horse" asked Buzzy "just one thing....." replied Staley ", he died last night, at which both men laughed and it remained a great joke between them. Among Staley's precious possessions were two horns he used in hunting for calling back the hounds. A cow/steer horn and a much loved **English ram's horn**. Nimrod Owings originally owned the ram's horn, he was an early colonial beagle and foxhound man, who carved the date 1774 on it, this being the date he received the horn at a hunt dinner as a souvenir of the hunt. Staley carved his name, address and the date he received it "1895" on the opposite side when he received it. Staley Doub was one of the great early Beagle breeders, he and Pottenger Dorsey, also of Frederick, Maryland, took on the mantle of the Rowett Beagles, after General Richard Rowett died in 1887. Staley never charged a stud fee or sold a dog, they were for his pleasure, occasionally giving one as a gift to a friend. The hounds were kept in the yard at his house, there never being more

than 25 – 30 hounds at any time. He bred many great hounds **Triumph, Hooker and Scorcher** to name but a few, whose names are ingrained in Beagle history. Staley was considered a Beagle expert who was often asked to judge at a bench show or field trial. Staley kept a Beagle scrapbook, full of records, data and pictures of the breed, his records were sought after by prominent writers. HW Prentice used it in his book *'The Beagle in America and England'*. It was with sadness in his old age that Staley's beagles disappeared, many were stolen by thieves who lifted boys over the fence to steal the best dogs. On his death the remainder passed to a Frederick resident. Ch. Dorsey's Pilot and Ch. Staley were Rowett's and served as foundation males for most of the early American breeding.

AM CH Stoke Place Sapper (Imported), was born in 1911 at the Stoke Place Kennels, England. He was registered in the Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles Stud Book in 1912 and sired several litters there. It was at the Peterborough show that Arthur Little, a trainer for the Wheatley beagles in England, saw Sapper. He was so impressed with him that he recommended to Mr. Harry C Phipps, Owner of the Wheatley Kennels of Long Island, New York to import him because they had been searching for a new stud dog to head his kennel. So in 1915 Sapper arrived in America and quickly became a bench show Champion. In a short time his influence on the pack was seen. Especially with bitches from the Councillor X Frantic stock. (Two Imported hounds from the Spring Hill Kennels UK). In the spring of 1919, Sapper was shown at Chicago and surprisingly offered for sale. He was purchased by Dr. CW Sanford of Arlington Heights, Illinois and later by Victor Wiley of Allenville, Illinois. It is said Sapper was sold for \$250 and resold for \$125, an incredible amount in 1919. Up to this time, Sapper had limited opportunities to prove himself outside of the Wheatley Kennels. This now changed and he was widely used at stud on Field Trial and Bench Show bitches. Breeders from all over the country took the opportunity to use him at stud. This hound sired litters right up to his death in 1923, 12-year's old. He sired 22 Bench Show Champions. Wheatley Chorus and Costly were Dual Champions. Midway Cute and Nobby Babe Sapper were Field Champions. Reno B Cole, a judge and a well-known Beagle author, saw Sapper at Chicago in 1919 and thought he was the best looking Beagle he had seen. At 8 years old, he described him as *"a hound of considerable bone and substance, perfectly straight in front with excellent feet, beautiful body and good strong quarters. In head he was all hound, although lacking the extremely long ears that give a Beagle the decided hound expression"* Later Reno added *"Stoke Place Sapper very nearly changed our whole idea of Beagle type in America and it may also be said that it was due to him that our present craze for black blankets came into being, often to the exclusion of more important features"* and finally *"Many hounds have left a brilliant record as producers of show hounds or working hounds but we believe none have equaled Stoke Place Sapper in the ability to beget hounds good in both lines and certainly none have left so strong an impression upon the appearance of our Beagles"* The Stoke Place Beagle pack, was based at Slough, England. The owner was Mr. Howard Vyse. He started in

1895 with 12 inch hounds, some of these are said to be of Mr. Crane's breeding. The height was gradually increased and in 1917 when the Stoke Place disbanded the height was 15 inches. They were described as a great pack of hounds. With regards to Sapper's ancestry, his dam **Winsome** '08, won the Champion Cup at Peterborough for best single bitch any age and along with Scholar '09 and 4 others won the best 3 couples of either sex and any age from one kennel in 1910. In 1912 she won the Silver cup for best-registered bitch and with another won the best couple of entered bitches. Scholar '09, with another, was best couple of any age and either sex not exceeding 14 inches. Spring Hill Councillor '11 was in some second place groups that year. Scholar '09 (13 ½ inches) was himself exported to America, to Mr. Appleton of the Waldingfield Beagles and went later to Mr. Burden of the Ragdale. While in England he made quite a name for himself as a successful sire and his name in a pedigree guaranteed work and good looks. However he did not make such an impression in America and his blood can be mostly found through Sapper. Arthur Little must have seen Sapper at Peterborough in 1914 as the 1915 show was cancelled due to the war. This might also explain why Sapper went to America as many packs were disbanded or reduced their kennel size due to shortage of food. Sapper was at one time the head of Wheatley breeding.

Hiram Card of Elora, Ontario, Canada also imported Beagles. His famous Card's Blue Cap was sired by Imported Champion Blue Cap out of Imported Blue Bell, belonging to William Asheton of Virginia. This established the "Blue Cap" strain that dominated the breed for many years. Examples of dominant early hounds from the Blue Cap strain were Fd. Ch. Sheik of Shady Shores, Fd. Ch. Lucky Boy II, and Fd. Ch. Avon Dispatch. L.M. Watson would take a Willet Randall Patch hound and two Blue Caps and establish the foundation stock for most of the successful hunting beagle lines that we have today. This strain led to later greats such as Fd. Ch. Gray's Linesman, Fd. Ch. Gray's Captain, Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Banker, Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Leader, Fd. Ch. Dickburn's Lady, Fd. Ch. Dickburn's Lad, Fd. Ch. Sambilly Joe, and many others. One of the most dominant Blue Caps was **Alibi Billy**. Billy was a popular stud dog and his reputation was that he produced hounds with extreme hunt, great noses but a little extra mouth. In the same era, another pioneer breeder Edward Marshall of Dowagiac, MI produced a bitch named Florienne; she was half Rowett. When bred to Ch. Hempfield's Little Dandy, she produced one of the most liked line control producing males of the Beagle breed of that time, Ch. Afton's Uncle Sam. The "Uncle Sams", when bred to Alibi Billy's offspring, produced the first real field trial Beagles exhibiting patience, nose, good mouths, and steady working style. This was the beginning of "The Change of Style" which at this point could have been a positive revolutionary change for the gun hunting beagle; however the field trialing "fad" of that day had other plans. The Alibi Billy x Uncle Sam cross dominated Beagling into the 1940's.

By the 1950's, field trial enthusiasts began to redefine the definition of "the finer points of hound work". By this point, many gun hunters and breeders that had

beagles from the Alibi Billy, Gray's Linesman, Pleasant Run, Yellow Creek, Blue Cap, Patch and a few others would continue to indulge in the sport of gun hunting but many would find themselves "weeded out" of the field trialing circuit or limited to the few beagle clubs that did not completely convert for the next few decades simply because they were unwilling to "breed out" some of the characteristics that the field trial standards of that day considered to be faults. Other breeders would take their dogs from these same lines, **Gray's Linesman**, Pleasant Run, Yellow Creek, Blue Cap and selectively breed to go in the direction of this popular and for many, very profitable field trial format. We must realize, the bloodline of a dog is like a vehicle in motion. As you line breed these dogs to keep and preserve what you have, it is the far and few in-between out crosses that you add to your breeding program that determines which direction that vehicle {characteristics' & traits of the bloodline} will go to or evolve into. This explains why there are dogs from the same lines that are as far apart in style as night is from day. In recent times there are brace beagles that have many of the same roots and beginnings as hare hounds with extreme opposite running styles yet they share the same ancestry many generations back. Throughout the years many lines were established with the combination of the many styles available such as Sammy R, Concord, Argo, Black River, Warfield, Weir Creek, Skull Fork, Little Ireland, Black Creek and later on Gay, Fish Creek and a few others. What cause's dogs of the same bloodline to be so different are the unrelated out crosses over the years. Pick any bloodline. Any line that is a "medium" speed hound. Take two litter mate sisters and breed one to a {brace style} hound and the other to a {Large pack on hare style} hound. Now take a female from each of these litters and breed them back to their own grand sire {the sire to the original two females you started with}. Now his would be tight line breeding on paper. When you looked at the pedigrees of the finished product of the pups from the final litter, you would see 3/4 of tight line breeding but the differences the two out crosses of the 1/4 brace style in one and 1/4 hare hound style in the other is going to make all the difference in the world when you watch these hounds run. If you continued to make the same {style} of out crosses, once every forth generation and you did this for 30 years, well you can see, though you started out with litter mate sisters the unrelated out crosses over the years that you used so that you can line breed without crossing the line into "inbreeding" determined which direction your line would go. Many gun hunters and breeders did make crosses with "current" trialing dogs even though they didn't trial and used them as a "equalizer" to maintain certain characteristics in their particular line.

Lets not forget a hound named Fd. Ch. Wilcliffe Boogie, offered by Jack Wilson a Michigan Beagler. He came on the scene in the early 1950's and changed Beagling in America forever. Because Boogie would slow down in extreme fashion and sometimes to a complete stop, and solve the scent line "exactly" as it was laid down by the rabbit, as opposed to ranging out, giving up or wandering off in search of another track, this hound's close check work caught the eye of hundreds of hound people and even more of an impact, the field trial judges.

From then on, the rules, demands and criteria of a field trial beagle drastically changed. From the Boogies came the greatest modern family of traditional brace field trial Beagles. This would be the beginning of the final stage where it would be for many lines of beagles a total separation of the “gun hunting beagle” and the “field trial beagle.” Originating on a small dairy farm near Springfield, Missouri, the Pearson Creek strain of Beagles was developed by George Nixon, who was by the standards of brace field trial beaglers, is by many proclaimed the greatest beagle breeder of all time. During the late 1960’s, 70’s and early 1980’s, Mr. Nixon’s hounds dominated the sport and helped many brace enthusiasts establish their own breeding program. The effect of the Pearson Creek hounds on the field trial beagle cannot be totally explained to its depth. During the same era, also springing from the Boogie line, came one of the all-time great producers of the brace breed, **Fd. Ch. Wind Creek Limbo**. Whelped in central Alabama, Limbo was at stud at Warren Smith’s kennel in Montgomery where he marked the breed forever. More than 30 years after his death, most of the great hounds of the breed trace directly back to Wind Creek Limbo. Between the influence of the Limbos and the Pearson Creeks, Beagle field trials became dominated by slow, skillful and very accurate hounds but gun hunters came to the conclusion that field trialers had a unforeseen and unintentional error bred into their dogs by the early breeders of the Brace era. Not all, but many could not be used for gun hunting. Along the way, breeding specifically for field trialing {skillfully and accurately running a line} and for the demands and criteria the judges of that day required,

the original “purpose” of the breed was lost. Gun hunters believed a beagle proved this through a desire to search and find promising cover of a rabbit and eagerness to explore it, regardless of hazards or discomfort. Regardless if it is hot, cold, dry, wet, in thick thorny brush or an open field, a dog must have the desire to adapt and still hunt and also have the proficiency for keeping control of the trail while making the most accurate forward progress in the shortest amount of time. Remember this, a rabbit should be passionately pursued to catch with the intent to destroy, rather than just half heartedly followed with the intent to play with as a toy.

At the beginning of this article I spoke of those hounds that were imported. In the early days of beagling, beagle competitions was a competition to see who had the beagle with the “total package.” Times changed and people bred their beagles differently and in the process we now see three totally different breeds of beagles. Though the Show Beagle, Traditional Brace Beagle and Gundog Beagle may all look the same and may all be “registered” beagles on paper, they are different. They are “wired” differently. Their traits and characteristics are totally different. Where one breeds for looks, the others for running the line ability, and another to possess a search, find and destroy mentality. Gun hunters within the trialing circuit felt what started out as a conglomerate group of rabbit hunters getting together to compete to establish who had the best rabbit hound, evolved into a completely different sport. I do want to point out, we must be careful and show great caution in pursuing dogs with the “extreme hunt, drive and speed” type of hounds. There

is the danger of repeating past mistakes except to the opposite extreme. It is possible for a breeder to breed themselves in a direction, while attempting to create or maintain a line of dogs with extreme drive, speed and determination to the point that they too accomplish having a unforeseen and unintentional error bred into their dogs. A dog that "must" run in a pack because they do not have the patience, nose or ability to circle a rabbit running solo. I find that most people rarely if ever solo their hounds. I don't think this was an intentional thought-out practice but it is just the way training has evolved. I believe because running in packs are how we usually hunt and running in packs are how trials are conducted, so this is how we have trained our dogs. Because of this our focus is not on the characteristics that it takes for a beagle to search, jump, and run it's own rabbit successfully independently the way it was meant to be. A dog that is the same dog whether it is running solo or with a pack. The rabbit chase is going to be a little different when using a pack simply because dogs are giving assistance to one another but there really should not be a "drastic" change of how consistent and smooth a run is whether you take five dogs or if you are soloing one dog. I guess it depends on if you have five dogs that have strengths and weaknesses that compliment each other or you have one dog that is well rounded and possess the ability to do it on their own, but wouldn't it be great if we all had five of the latter? I have witnessed Field Champions that look absolutely incredible in a pack or trial but if you solo them they are absolutely horrible. Some can't circle a rabbit and others take as long as a "Traditional Brace Hound" to circle a rabbit because they are constantly correcting mistakes instead of running the rabbit. Many people are breeding to these dogs, focusing on the red ink in their pedigrees while not having a clue what they are capable of on their own. When we only focus on what a dog can do in a pack or trial, in return we don't focus on the traits and characteristics that it takes for a dog to be the "total package", so we don't breed for these traits because they do not rank very high on our priority list and before we know it, we have many dogs that look, sound, and appear to be great in our packs or trials but are actually "me tooer's" and they rely on other dogs for the traits that they lack and they themselves can only circle a rabbit in a decent manner on their "best" day. I think many beaglers bring this on themselves because we all want that smooth, consistent and steady run every time we go to the field and we ourselves because of family, children and work schedules do not have the time, patience or discipline to leave dogs at home and solo our hounds to the point that they may have the opportunity to become a well rounded "jack of all trades" complete package rabbit hound.

Traditional brace hounds remained careful, skillful and stylish in their work while alternative formats for the hunting beagle began to spring forth and really gained popularity in the mid to late 1970's, which also became extremely popular and very quickly took over and dominated the field trial "fad" by the early 1990's until this present time. In the late 1970's, it was the beginning of an invasion of hounds that the beagle breeders, gun hunters and field trialers of old like Richard Rowett, Pottinger Dorsey, Hiram Card, Willet Randall and L.M. Watson described as their ideal hunting beagle. Dogs that instinctively "ran to catch." The pioneer breeders,

kennels and lines that were established are another story within itself. Though the Traditional Brace beagle is still very active and popular in the AKC, the AKC, CKC, UKC, ARHA and PKC all share formats that are geared for the Gundog Beagle. It is this reason that the Gundog Field Trial Beagles outnumber the Traditional Brace beagles approx. 80 to 1. Small Pack Option {SPO} and Gundog Brace trials broke the ice and made trials available for owners who enjoyed a faster hound. The breeders and field trialers who's participation in competing in field trials were limited because of the lack of clubs that involved themselves in the type of format for these type hounds, well, their wait was over. These "gundog" events grew rapidly in popularity because the hounds were more suitable for hunting than the slower, skillful and super-accurate traditional brace hounds that were usually used for field trialing only. Various other opportunity for beagle competitions, such as formal packs recognized by the National Beagle Club, Large Pack, United Kennel Club trials, and American Rabbit Hound Association's events and trials opened the flood gates and allowed everyone to enjoy their particular type of Beagle. Bench shows are also greatly emphasized at these field trials to encourage breeders to make an attempt to achieve the ultimate; attain the total package. Beagle field trials are the largest single-breed events sponsored by the American Kennel Club. Rabbit hunting once again is quickly becoming the American hunter's "choice of game." The reason for this article? It is much easier to plan where you are going if you know where you have been. The lesson learned? Do not breed for where the money is! Do not conform your breeding standards according to the latest "fads" in field trialing! Do not be kennel blind and do not "settle". Most of all, don't ever even entertain the idea that you know it all. My first day of college in the first class that I had, my first college professor wrote a statement on the board up front. It stated "the more you know, the more you know you don't know". To be honest, I don't remember many of the things from that class but I will always remember that statement. I am grateful to have come in contact with John Parks of Indiana, who is an admirer of the Black Creek hounds and is an informational "guru" concerning the hunting beagle, who's research and writing skills I could never scratch the surface of. Also Larry Perry of West Virginia, who is a strait up "Dingus MacRae" man. His integrity and sometimes "brutal" honesty of what a dog should be and what you must do to achieve it has affected or I should say infected the way I view the hunting beagle today. He is what I call the Paul "Bear" Bryant or Woody Hayes in the hunting beagle world. Definitely "old school". He has forgotten more than I probably will ever learn.

Let your motto be; "For the betterment of the hunting beagle" and finally, whether you have slow dogs, fast dogs, medium speed dogs, Traditional Gundog Brace, Hare Hounds, UBGF, SPO, Progressive Pack, Little Pack, Large Pack or any other types that I have not mentioned, remember, when the rubber meets the road, your feeding, training, hunting and living with the choice of what kind of hounds you choose to have, nobody else. First and most important, your dogs should please you. Good Luck & God Bless, Jim Lane - Laneline Beagles