



Left: The cover of the 30-page booklet presented to all who attended the 1988 National Specialty Awards Banquet. Among other things the booklet listed all 43 members of the fledgling 1939 club, the Articles of Incorporation, a list of the first 22 bench champions and the five male Goldens that had won a Sporting group or BIS from 1932-1939. All field trial placements between 1937-1939 were also listed.

Below (top and middle): Lomberdale Blondin and Dan Hill Judy – first and second Golden Retriever registered by AKC in 1925. Blondin and Judy were owned by Robert Appleton of East Hampton, Long Island, NY. They also produced the first litter registered with AKC. It was whelped December 12, 1925.

Below (bottom): 1940 – Beavertail Gay Lady (Rockhaven Ben Bolt\*\*\* ex Rockhaven Beryl). BOB winner at the first National Specialty. Not quite 10 months old, she won from the puppy class over an entry of 43 including three Champions.

## Notes and Quotes from the Archives

by Anne Shannon, GRCA Archivist

At the 1988 National Specialty hosted by Badger Golden Retriever Club, every attendee at the annual banquet was presented with a 30-page booklet detailing some of the highlights of the first 50 years of GRCA's history. It was lovingly compiled by Mary A. Strange, Sr., of Badger GRC with acknowledgments to Ainslie Mills, Christopher R. Burton, Pagey Elliott, Ruthe Berendsen, Roberta Vesley (AKC Library Director), and Mrs. John Magoffin.

This small book will serve as a jumping off point for what will become a series of articles based on the GRCA Archives. GRCA has been fortunate to have had members who recorded the story of the Golden Retriever in North America since its beginning. The qualities of good looks, temperament, working ability and character that inspired early fanciers to establish our club are the same traits that we nurture today. Considering the obstacles faced by breeders of dogs in the '30s and '40s, we realize what a powerful hold the Golden exerted even then!

We have chosen to reprint the majority of this excellent booklet along with some historic photographs as an introduction to those who came before. We are also including some of the "firsts" in our breed. AS

This is, as you all know, the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Golden Retriever Club of America. We would be remiss if we did not pay tribute to the men and women who founded our club. The club's actual "birth date" was May 6, 1938, when it was incorporated in the State of Colorado.

In writing about the national club's early history we will not presume, nor could we, to encompass all the many facets that brought these Golden enthusiasts together. They formed a club that has endured and grown from a few to its present membership of over four thousand. It is today one of the oldest and largest breed clubs in the United States. We will subsequently name these early pioneers, present some of the material from the first yearbook and give you an idea how fortunate we are that our foundation was so well laid. Needless to say, it is up to each of us to continue to work to maintain their early ideals and to see that our breed flourishes and we protect what the founding members established for us all. Although Colonel Samuel S. Magoffin was the driving force in establishing a national club in America, it was Christopher R. Burton of Vancouver, Canada, who introduced him to the Golden Retriever. Shortly after World

***"...let us resolve that there will never be one group of dogs for show and a totally different group for the field."***

***– E. F. Rivinus, 1938***





Left: 1930 – Telegram Burton sent specifying “Want large, well broken Golden Retriever male not over age three...”

Below: Christopher Burton, Vancouver, B.C., wrote to his brother-in-law in England to facilitate the deal for Samuel Magoffin to import Speedwell Pluto.



Below: Sam Magoffin’s Golden Retrievers circa 1938. (l-r) Can CH. Rockhaven Lempi, Can CH. Rockhaven Lassie, Am-Can Ch. Rockhaven Harold, Can CH. Rockhaven Amber, Can CH. Rockhaven Maiha, Am-Can CH. Speedwell Pluto, Am-Can CH. Wilderness Tangerine. This historical photo shows the breed’s first three American Champions. Additionally, Pluto was the first Best in Show Golden.



Retriever with Irish Setters. The typical English Golden of today is different.” He then quotes from the standard with regard to a few features that are subject to criticism.

“General appearance – Should be of a symmetrical, active, powerful dog, a good level mover, sound and well put together, with a kindly expression, not clumsy or long in the leg.

“Head – Broad in skull well set on a clean and muscular neck, muzzle powerful and wide, not weak jawed, good stop.

“Color – Rich golden, must not be dark as an Irish Setter or cream color.

War I, Sam Magoffin, an avid sportsman, asked his friend Chris to recommend a good gun dog. Chris suggested a Golden and shortly set the wheels in motion that brought Speedwell Pluto to Vancouver from England.

We have all heard about Speedwell Pluto who became an American and Canadian Champion and was America’s first Golden champion and first Best in Show winner. He was hunted regularly, but never ran in field trials. More importantly, Speedwell Pluto was an outstanding producer.

From his two kennels, “Rockhaven” in Vancouver and “Gilmockie,” originally in Vancouver, but later moved to Colorado, Samuel Magoffin bred the Golden Retrievers that are the source of many of our Golden Retrievers in America and Canada today. Speedwell Pluto himself sired four American champions and many Canadian titleholders. We owe Colonel Magoffin and his Golden Retrievers a great deal.

Samuel Magoffin was not only the founder of the Golden Retriever Club of America, but also the first president of the national club. His name and the other officers of the club are noted in the first yearbook and given on a separate page. The early members are also listed. It is to all of them that we are greatly indebted.

A rich source of information about the history of the Golden Retriever during 1938 was the American Kennel Club *Gazette*. The correspondent was E. F. Rivinus, Jr., Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania. Mr. Rivinus’ articles appeared in a section open to clubs and individuals who were not members of the American Kennel Club. This section was called “An Open Forum on Dogs.”

In his April 1938 article he speaks of his frustration and the frustration of others in the lack of entries and competition in the available shows. Of equal irritation “is having a well meaning, but excusably ignorant judge put up a type of dog – usually setter – which has no right to win.” He adds, “A Golden Retriever club is the answer to both problems.”

After extensive personal correspondence on the subject of a Golden Retriever club, Mr. Rivinus reports in his May 1938 article, “...that the response so far has been very encouraging.” In speaking of the question of membership, Mr. Rivinus appeals to the active and interested breeders. He says these people “...are absolutely necessary for the existence and proper functioning of a club. They must be the brain and the heart of the club. But alone they are not enough. We must remember that it is the mass of single dog owners who must be the substance of the club...financially they are the backbone of the club.”

Mr. Rivinus again in this same article writes, “...regarding the tendency on the part of American judges to confuse the Golden

*Notes & Quotes from the Archives, continued*

"On the first point I must call attention to the fact that the Golden Retriever is a short-coupled and comparatively squat dog as compared with the leggier and more streamlined Setter.

"In the head, again the Golden differs from the Setter. He should be broad across the skull and wide in the muzzle. Mrs. Charlesworth in her splendid book says: 'It is far better to breed from a dog with a broad skull and short wide muzzle than one with a broad skull and long weak muzzle. There are far too many examples of this latter fault in existence today.'

"Finally, as to color, let me urge judges not to fault a dog too quickly for being light...the standard leaves considerable room for variation as to color, so, in the case of an otherwise good dog, let it be a relatively secondary consideration. Any gundog judge will look for soundness and condition. Therefore let us concentrate

on working towards the true Golden type."

***"What we have in the Golden Retriever is a grand hunting dog for both upland game and waterfowl during the hunting season, and the best companion imaginable for all the family for the balance of the year."***

***– S.S. Magoffin, 1938***

listing the current officers, which may be found elsewhere in this Anniversary booklet.

"The Golden Retriever Club of America was formed primarily for the purpose of assisting, by selective breeding, the further development of the Golden Retriever as a gundog. All serious breeders were asked to join as Class "A" – \$50 members, and all other owners and enthusiasts as Class "B" – non-voting \$5 members.

"This purpose of this was to keep the management in the hands of the serious breeders and prevent any small group from trying to dominate the Club until such time as our membership reaches a total of 150. Further, it was written in our Constitution that only Class "A" members could be elected to the Board of Directors, (the names of the original Board are then given).

"This Board fairly well represents the Golden Retriever geographically, the preponderant number being in the St. Paul-Minneapolis area.

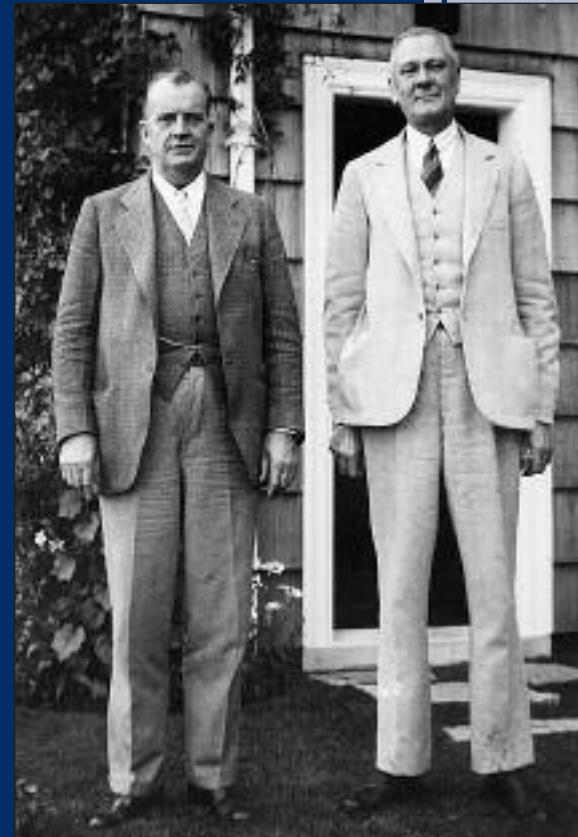
"Furthermore, it was decided to divide the country into four regions: the Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western, with each region principally running its own 'show' with regard to bench shows, field trials, membership and so forth. This was done to prevent discord in the Club.

"In 1938, Richard Ryan's Nero Of Roedare (Sandy Of Nutwood ex Rockhaven Queen) won the Gilnockie Challenge Trophy for his outstanding field trial performances. James S. Thompson's CH. Toby Of Willow Loch\*\*\* (Rockhaven Rory ex Rusty Heger) won the Rockhaven Speedwell Pluto Challenge Trophy for his spectacular Best Dog in Show award at the St. Paul Kennel Club Show.

Right:  
Colonel Samuel Magoffin with one of the early Rockhaven/Gilnockie dogs. Not only was Magoffin considered the founder of the Golden Retriever Club of America, but he also served as the first president.



Right:  
Brothers John (left) and Sam Magoffin. The Gilnockie kennel name was registered with the Canadian Kennel Club around 1918 by Bart Armstrong of Winnipeg. Upon his death, the kennel name was transferred to his friend, Samuel S. Magoffin. Sam was already using "Rockhaven," so when another kennel was established in Colorado under the supervision of Sam's brother, John Rogers Magoffin, Gilnockie was used there. John and his wife, Maizie, were close friends of Eliesa Enloe. When John died, "Gilnockie" was transferred to Eliesa, and eventually, to her daughter Mrs. Pat Hower. Gilnockie has to be one of the longest continually active kennel names.



Right:  
1939 – First Field Champion – FC Rip (Speedwell Reuben ex CH. Speedwell Tango) Owned and handled by Paul Bakewell III.



*Notes & Quotes from the Archives, continued*

"I might add that the Gilnockie Cup was named after the late B.M. Armstrong, of Gilnockie fame, who was instrumental in securing the recognition of the Golden Retriever as a separate breed, in both the Canadian and the American Kennel clubs.

"It was decided to name the Bench Challenge Trophy after Speedwell Pluto as he was the first Golden Retriever to win the Best in Show award, at the Puget Sound Kennel Club show in 1932 in Seattle.

"I might advise that the organization work of the Club is practically complete and Mr. Gregg and I hope to turn over the management and accounts to newly elected officers who will serve your interests until 1940. What we need most now is new members.

"In closing, I might advise the novice breeder of Golden Retrievers not to be discouraged if all the litters do not turn out to be field trial winners or best in show dogs. What we have in the Golden Retriever is a grand hunting dog for both upland game and waterfowl during the hunting season, and the best companion imaginable for all the family for the balance of the year."

Mr. Magoffin's article was signed: S.S. Magoffin, President, Gilnockie Kennels, Englewood, Colorado.

Two other articles are found in the February and March *Gazette* 1940. One by John K. Wallace, newly elected President of the GRCA, who reveals his concern about the growth of the breed. He said, "It is a temptation to turn out quantity, not quality, puppies. This must be guarded against as nothing can drag a breed down quickly as a lot of poor stock. It is very necessary to breed intelligently and above all only raise those puppies that are a credit to the Golden Retrievers..."

Mr. Rivinus in the last article that will be quoted says. "There are now representatives in America of practically every worthwhile strain of Golden Retrievers. The



Top: Rockhaven Litter – British Columbia K.C. 7/19/46 Rockhaven Rawdon ex Rockhaven Lady. Sam Magoffin 4th from left and Mrs. Magoffin far right. The dogs are identified on the photo left to right as: Rockhaven Bettie, Goldie, Blondie, Bess, Rockhaven Lady (dam), Gilnockie Patience (granddam).

Above left: First Dual Champion. Stilrovin' Rip's Pride. Bred by Ralph Boalt, owned by Mariel King of Winona, MN. Grandson of FC Rip.

Above right: CH. Toby Of Willow Loch\*\*\* the first American Bred Best in Show winner. Toby was bred and owned by James S. Thompson and handled by Orin Benson. (CH. Rockhaven Rory ex Rusty Heger)

Bottom: A gathering of members at the 1950 National Specialty Annual Banquet held in Rochester, MN. CH. Golden Knoll's Shur Shot was BOB and FC Ready Always Of Marianhill won the Open All-Age stake. "Lucky" went on to win the National Retriever Trial in 1951.



## Notes & Quotes from the Archives, continued

Speedwell, Noranby, Yelme, Rockhaven, Anningsley and Stubbings pedigrees are now liberally scattered about the country. With such a wide range to choose from, we can now be increasingly selective in our breeding. Most of us who have been able to watch two or more generations of our dogs reach their prime, must have been able to note certain physical characteristics which prove dominant. In most cases we can easily trace these characteristics to their original source. If there are unwanted traits – such as bad hocks, curl over tails, narrow heads – in other words, definite faults as described in our standard – it is our duty to make a real effort to breed away from such a strain...the standard was made to produce an ideally constructed retriever. While the breed is young as a breed here, let us resolve that there will never be one group of dogs for show and a totally different group for the field."

These words written by Mr. Rivinius and Mr. Wallace should give all of us an opportunity to pause and to reflect on where the Golden is today, 50 years later.

About the time that the Articles of Incorporation were filed on May 6, 1938, the American Kennel Club furnished the newly elected Secretary-Treasurer, W.F. Gregg, with a list of approximately 150 names of registered owners of Golden Retrievers. Mr. Gregg then wrote to these owners asking them to become members of the Golden Retriever Club of America. He offered two types of membership, already described in Mr. Magoffin's article in the *Gazette*, a Class "A" and a Class "B" membership.

This was a busy period for the Golden Club as they attempted to gather together more Golden owners who were enthusiastic and dedicated to the breed. They also were thinking about publishing a Yearbook that subsequently was compiled, dated 1939, and finally printed in 1940.

Early correspondence reveals that Samuel Magoffin had, at one time, entertained the thought that he would write a history of the Golden in America. Unfortunately, in spite of doing extensive research, he changed his mind. His interpretation of the early years would have been invaluable today. A Joe MacGaheran of Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1948 thought he might write a book but to our knowledge this was never done. Too bad!

One letter from Sam Magoffin to Joe MacGaheran stated that in the early days, prior to the formation of the Club, the AKC did not have a separate classification for the Golden Retrievers but listed them on a card index as "Retrievers." When the AKC recognized the Golden as a separate breed in 1936, they also changed their card-index to show that our breed was duly identified as "Golden Retrievers." Mr. Magoffin also said that prior to AKC recognition, few hunting enthusiasts bothered about registering their dogs. He said that some of the early breeders of registered dogs were not worthy of historical mention because their strain died out entirely by 1930. Therefore, he never considered them as influencing the breed in the United States.

As the fledgling club became established, small groups around the country began to think about starting member clubs in their areas, at that time known as "Chapters." Two such clubs that were formed were the Golden Retriever Club of Illinois and the Golden Retriever Club of Wisconsin. This latter club we now know as the Badger Golden Retriever Club adopted this name in 1968.

At any rate, the midwest, which we know today as the Central Region, had the distinction of having the largest number of Golden enthusiasts. Perhaps that is why after much consideration the first National Specialty and Field Trial was held at Thiensville and Mequon, Wisconsin, May 13 and 14, 1940. How the composition of Specialties over the years has changed! The original one had an entry of 45 in conformation, none in obedience and 44 in field.

Right: Mr. Daniel Pomeroy and the noted field trial trainer Charlie Morgan pictured with 1950 National FC Beautywood's Tamarack.

From 1941 through 1951, Golden won the National Retriever Trial four times: 1941 NFC King Midas Of Woodend, 1944 NFC Shelter Cove Beauty, 1950 NFC Beautywood's Tamarack, 1951 NFC-AFC: Can FC Ready Always of Marianhill. There have been no NFC Golden Retrievers since 1951.

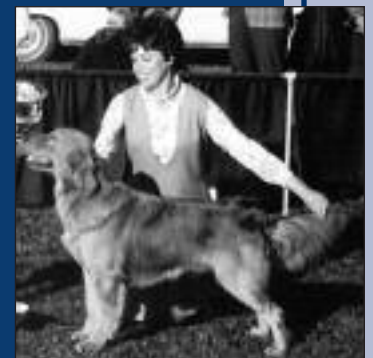


Right: 1947 – First Utility Dog – Goldwood Toby UD (CH. Toby Of Willow Loch\*\*\* ex Goldwood Ditt), bred by Goldwood Kennels and owned by Mrs. Mark D. Elliott.



Left: 1950 – First Utility Dog Tracker – Featherquest Trigger UDT (Goldwood Toby UD ex Banty's Pluto Of Bushaway), bred by Dr. Mark Elliott and owned by Marjorie B. Perry

Right: 1971 – First CH-UDT – Am-Can CH. Beckwith's Malagold Flash WC; Am-Can UDT, OS, SDHF (Am-Can CH. Beckwith's Copper Ingot ex Am-Can CH. Beckwith' Frolic Of Yeo CDX). Owned by Marvin & Carole Kvamme and bred by Connie Gerstner & R. E. Beckwith. "Robbie" was the first CH-UDT in the SDHF and he held the distinction of going BIS and HIT at the same show!





Left: 1977 – First OTCH all breeds – OTCH Moreland’s Golden Tonka, OBHF (CH. Misty Morn’s Sunset CD, TD, WC, OS, SDHF ex CH. Moreland’s Golden Bonnie). Owned by Russel H. Klipple and bred by William C. Prentiss. “Tonka” had over 177 HITs!



Left: 1977 – First CH-OTCH – CH-OTCH Russo’s Gold-Rush Charlie ex Russo’s Wildwood Flower). Owned by Edward L. Hamm & L. C. Johnson and bred by Mercer Russo.



Left: 1997 – First VST-Champion Tracker – CT; Can Ch. Westbury Golden Pine Escapade CDX, TDX, VST; Can CDX (CH. Asdhford’s Arika Kin ex Golden Pine Bearly Irish CD). Owned by Kathy McIntyre, R. Webber, H. & S. Carpenter, N. Kelly and bred by Harry & Sue Carpenter and Nancy Kelly.



Left: 1999 – First MACH – MACH12 Flashpaws Kooki Li’l Charmer UD, ADHF (OTCH Wynwood’s Thrill Of It All UDX, JH, OS, OBHF ex OTCH Tejas Trace Of Topaz UDX, JH, MX, AXJ, WC, VCX, OD) Owned by Maggie Downey and bred by Jane Simmons-Moake.



Left: 2002 – First Champion-Champion Tracker – CH.-CT Manor Spring Golden Beau UDX, JH, WCX, VCX (Ch. Elysian Sky Hi Dubl Exposure UDT, MH, WCX\*\*, VCX, OS ex CH. Honor’s Bunny Hop CD, OA, NAJ, WC VCX, OD). Owned by Freda & Larry Thiel and bred by Brenda Radcliffe and Ed Blakemore.



Left: 2005 – First FC-AFC-OTCH Topbrass Ascending Elijah, OS, FDHF (Wraith’s Duncan MH\*\*\*, OS ex Hillviews Ready To Smoke, OD). Owned by Brian & Connie Cleveland and Judy Rasmusson and bred by Jackie & Joe Mertens and James & Judy Powers.

## Notes & Quotes from the Archives, continued

In accordance with the National Specialty rotation system, Badger became the host of the [specialty that celebrated the] 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Club. We realize that the actual formation of the GRCA grew out of a small group of Golden breeders in Colorado, [so, it is appropriate that in 1989] Mile-Hi, the Colorado Golden Retriever club will be hosting the 50th Anniversary of the first National Specialty. These details, however, do not really matter. What does matter is our mutual concern that we do not lose our respect and love for the breed, We must protect it and resolve to maintain what our founders wanted – a dog who meets the standard, and a dog that can perform in the show ring or the field.

Vern Bower, a familiar and respected name to all of us, summed up her feelings in the *Golden Retriever News*, dated October 1964, following another Badger event, the 25th Anniversary of the first National Specialty. She wrote, “So what do I remember...the good looking, hard running field dogs and the ‘standardized’ Golden in the show ring! I like what I saw, I liked the dogs!” Hopefully, we all will come away from our present Specialty in 1988 subscribing to Vern’s words: “We liked the dogs!” That feeling is what brings us all together today and will continue to do so in the years ahead.

Before concluding this short account of the early years, it is interesting to recall what it was like in 1938. As most non-dog friends will tell you there is more to life than dogs. So what was life like for the Golden pioneers?

Back then, 50 years ago, the minimum wage was 25 cents and there was no 40-hour week. Two hundred dollars a month was a good starting salary, which is not as bad as it sounds. Goods and services then were much cheaper, and our expectations were not as lofty. A nice three-bedroom home could be built for less than \$5,000 and a new Ford cost less than \$700. Even more impressive was the fact that the car could be filled with gas at 10 cents a gallon!

Our “founding fathers” did not have television, antibiotics or frozen food. They lived without fluorescent lights, credit cards and ballpoint pens. For them time sharing meant togetherness, not computers; a chip meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware; and software wasn’t even a word.

They lived in an era before pantyhose or drip-dry clothes. Before dishwashers, home freezers or electric blankets. Hawaii and Alaska had not become states. Generally they were married first and then lived together. How quaint!

The top news story in 1938 was the hurricane that hit Long Island, New York; 680 lives were lost and there was \$400 million in property damage. Overseas, Czechs were mobilizing in fear of German aggression. Americans were trying to understand the foreign news and more specifically to understand Hitler. Neville Chamberlain was running around with his umbrella, FDR, the President, was New Dealing left and right and trying (unsuccessfully) to pack the Supreme Court. Spencer Tracy and Bette Davis were the leading actor and actress. The “Damn Yankees” were pretty much in control of baseball. Big Bands were the thing in dancing led by, to name a few, Benny Goodman, Guy Lombardo, Tommy Dorsey and Wayne King. Hit tunes included “Jeepers Creepers,” “My Heart Belongs to Daddy” and “I’ll Be Seeing You.”

The year 1938 was a relatively happy period. The worst years of the Great Depression were coming to an end and fortunately, no one could foresee the future, In three years, December 7, 1941, the “Day of Infamy” was to change their lives and their existence.

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