

A Rare Find

The Weimaraner Club of America's website, www.weimclubamerica.org has a wealth of information about our breed, including its history. Part of the history section lists books about our breed, and included is the oldest US book, *The Weimaraner*, by Jack Denton Scott (Fawcett-Dearing Publishing, 1953). It is noted that this book is extremely rare.

Because of its rarity, many Weimaraner enthusiasts may not have read it or even be aware of its existence. Recently I was lucky enough to be given a copy, and I'd like to share some of its content.

To fully appreciate this book, it must be put into historical perspective. It was published in 1953, a time of tremendous hype about our breed. The Weimaraner was the new rock star of dogdom, touted as capable of astounding feats in the field, at home, and in police work. It was an era when the Weimaraner bumped human luminaries off the cover of *Collier's* magazine and was featured in full color as the new super dog. In the pages of a 1950 *Saturday Evening Post*, the Weimaraner was called the world's smartest dog, displaying almost human intelligence. To illustrate the point a story is told of a Weimaraner who puts his owner's other dogs into the kennel at night, closes their doors and then comes into the house to sleep. It was a time when hyperbole ruled.

The book itself is bound in an appropriate shade of grey leather, the pages' edges in gold leaf. The cover is a heavily embossed head of a Weimaraner along with the title and name of the author. No expense was spared in its production. It reeks of the attitude that this book is not for the common masses and is just as superior as the new "Wunderhund."

As with many other books about our breed, there's an introductory discussion on possible origins of the Weimaraner and the inevitable conclusion that no one knows for sure. However, the Scott book provides many direct quotes from obscure 19th century German writings on possible contributing breeds. The rarity of the breed and how closely it was guarded by its originators in a far corner of Germany is evident in the detailed chapter. To illustrate the point, it is recounted that some time during the first half of the 20th century there was a Weimaraner exhibited in a Berlin zoo.

The first breed standard adopted by the AKC in 1944 is printed in its entirety. Much of the content remains in our current standard, but there are a number of interesting departures. For example, in describing general appearance, color is listed as, "Gray (Silver, Bright, Dark, Yellow); the Dark Gray may be either ash or blue...A white star on the chest is allowable...any yellow tinge in such star is a definite fault."

Another chapter lists all of the Weimaraner champions in the US since almost a decade of AKC recognition. The number is only 165. Contrast that with now when the average number of Weimaraners who attain their championships in just one year is about the same.

Interested in knowing more about the book? Let me know and if there is enough interest, I'll make it the subject of a future column.

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