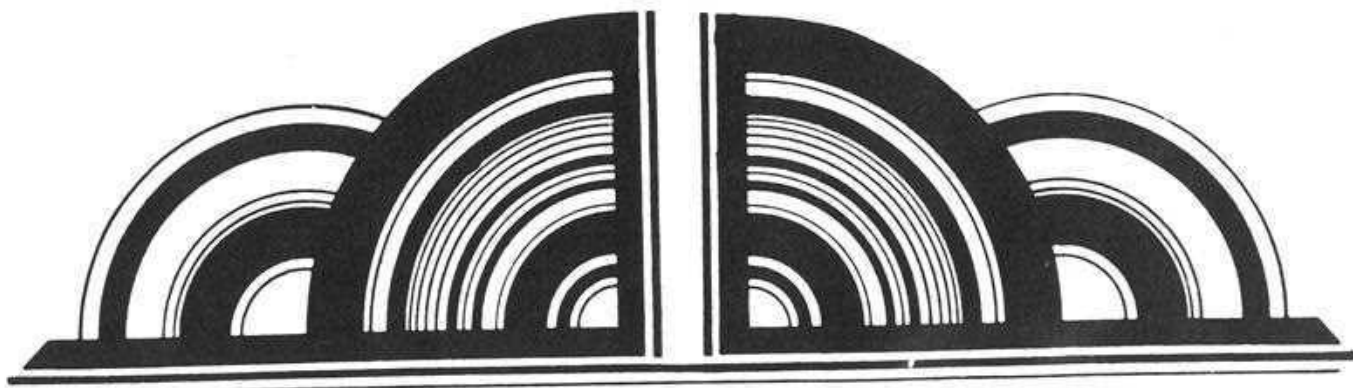


The
SAMOYED
QUARTERLY



Fall 1983

\$7



SAMOYED PEOPLE

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks With
Mildred Sheridan Davis
PARK-CLIFFE KENNELS
Mt. Sinai, New York

This interview was conducted in August, 1982 at the home of Mildred Sheridan Davis by Cynthia Kerstiens.

How did you get started in dogs?

The first two Sams I ever saw were two doors down from here. Jack Carter had brought them over from the Kilburn-Scott kennel. The male was a long, skinny wolf-type Sam, and the female was a sweet little Panda bear, a lovely dog. That was in the Spring of 1914. The man was going to raise them. I lived around the corner here from where the kennels were; I was thirteen or fourteen years old. Then the war



Mrs. Mildred Sheridan Davis at age 83, in Samoyeds since 1914

broke out. Mr. Carter went back, lost his leg and died. His two dogs were sent to the Long Island Pet Shop, owned by Dr. Altmon. We used to board our canary with him. So he took the dogs up to his place in Reinbeck and for years afterwards, Brooklyn was full of white dogs that looked like Spitz. I guess his dogs didn't have any pedigree, but the female was a beauty. I loved her so! I wanted one; I hunted for one of those white Sams for years and years.

Finally I got one from Bertha Ash, who had Lulu dogs, which were white Spitz-Sammies from Alsace Lorraine, and she sold me one of those for \$25. It must have been pretty good because it had gotten first prize in a pet show in Brooklyn. However, it died of distemper right away. It wasn't the type I wanted. I thought these were Chows that I wanted - the female looked like a white Chow. So I finally got around to getting to the Bainbridge Chow Kennels of Brooklyn. I was told that I didn't want a Chow, I wanted a Sam. I was sent up to Mrs. Lincoln in Greenwich, which is the first I'd known that they were up there. So we paid \$75 for a male puppy without any pedigree. He grew to be a beautiful dog. In 1916, during the Preparedness Parade, with the soldiers and the sailors at the Plaza in Brooklyn, a Ford came around the corner too fast; it had the flat front fenders with a sharp edge. It hit the dog right above the eye and he dropped dead. The band went on, but the car behind stopped. He picked me up and picked the dog up. I lived only a couple of blocks away, so he took me home. He raised blue Persians, and I had a blue Persian male. We got quite friendly, and I

knew him until he left. He was quartered at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I suppose this man knew what the dog looked like, and on the Asiatic Squadron's Maneuvers north of Japan, a lot of the officers walked inland to the Eskimo villages. There he met the Hetman, who had these dogs, and one of them was tied to a stake. Dr. Skellye asked about it, and he said they were going to eat it. They were going to use the fur for a bed blanket and the feet for boots. Of course, he being a lover of animals, he pulled out what was in his pocket: a penknife, pen and some money, a big Ingersoll watch, this and that. He bought the dog with this. After he bought him and started back to the ship with him, he found the dog had only one eye and one ear. That didn't matter to him; he kept that dog quartered on the Graf Valder Sea, which was a captured German



Mr. William B. P. Davis with his "pet" Int. Ch. Park Cliffe Snow Pack Flake

patrol boat. That dog lived on that ship until the Commandant of the Brooklyn Navy Yard got mad at the dog fights and ordered them all out by Sunday morning. Well, there's not much you can do with two white dogs on a Sunday morning, so he put them in a taxi. It was easy walking distance of the Navy Yard, so he brought the dogs to me. He was so glad to get rid of them.

I remember the Sunday morning he brought them so well - you'd think it was yesterday! The dog was old but he lived until about 1927. He never made friends with anybody but the puppies; he loved puppies and would play with them but otherwise, he sat like the Sam sits when he is mad, sulking in a corner. He lived with me all those years. I have pictures of him but I can't find them. (They are all upstairs in the attic.) He was the first Sam ... then, the man got so interested. Being a dog lover, he went around to the east side of England to buy a puppy. They sent him to the Russian fur company because they had just come in with a boatload of furs. He bought this little dog, a puppy. Really, you can't imagine anything being more different from the male. They were as different as night and day. She was a fat, fluffy, spotlessly clean, always shiny, pug-nosed, very good Sammy. She lived quite a long time. All those white dogs that are in the first of the Sam Club came from that pair. I showed them in the 1923 Westminster Dog Show, which only had one class of Sams.



From The New York Herald, 1923, l to r, Zarona, Barin, Nanook and Kayla

There were two champions in it and a funny little dog that didn't even look like a Sam, named Otiska. She had hundreds of puppies for Mrs. Romer. This little dog got fourth.

Mrs. Ella Fowler of Conneaut, Ohio, who has never had any recognition of what she has done for the Sam club, came to my house at five in the morning after the show and bought Lady Olga. She paid \$120 for her, which was an enormous price. She drove home in an open Ford. From that day until that dog died ten or twelve years later, she sent her to the best champion every year that could be had. She had puppies by Ch. Tobolsk, Ch. Trip, Ch. Nico, all the champions. Every year, every single dog, every single Sam of those years, came from Lady Olga. That was the dog I sold her. She never got any recognition at all. I don't think people have ever even heard of her. Her most famous dog was Ch. Icy King, considered the best dog in America in his day. She spread those dogs all through Ohio and the Midwest. She did an awful lot for the Sams.

In the meantime, there were a few here in the city and in New Jersey. There was Mr. Pinkham's Laika Kennel; his dogs were very heavily marked with cream; they were all cream. They were more cream than need be because he came from the red part of Jersey, and the coal was in the coat and never did come out. Just like this male of mine; he never came out white because he stayed in the soft coal so long. So those were the dogs - his



Eng/Am/Int Ch. Snowpack White Cloud of Park-Cliffe



Koniao - Sparks, Nevada

three males. As you see, they removed my dog from the picture! Tsilma, Kolys, Nanook. (laughter) That is in the old books as being their dogs. So anyway, I guess it was at the 1923 show, the Prince of Wales came to see my dogs. He said his aunt raised Sams, but she wouldn't have anything but a white one. It would have to be pure white. That is why the Sams in all of England were white. They got rid of the colored ones. I have pictures of the black ones. His aunt had quite a kennel of Sams, and he was very interested in them. He said he was going to send me this end that, and never did. But I thought it was very nice of him; his talk on the dogs was very nice.

So 1923 was the first they really got around; Mrs. Reid then had the Marusa Kennels. She only had them for a little while and she had dogs that were very beautiful. They didn't have tails or they had hip dysplasia. That hip dysplasia got all through from the couple of champions she had. I saw a dog of hers shown at a show that couldn't even stand up on his hind legs, yet the dog won because it was otherwise nice.

There was the Ashdown Kennels; she didn't show much. She started with my dogs as working dogs then she imported a couple of champions, then she disappeared. There was Top of the World Kennels, which was right across this harbor here. I wanted to go over and buy Evelo. We went over to get her, but this girl was even younger than I, I guess. She must have been about 14 or 15, a schoolgirl. She had Ch. Malschick, one of the finest dogs I ever saw. He is one of the first champions; Evelo was his daughter. I went over to get her, and she wouldn't sell her at all. Ch. Malschick had another brother, who was as different as day is from night; this was Ch. Shut Balackerer, who was the homeliest dog I ever saw. He was the wolf



1971, Chico, 1 yr old.

type: long, skinny legs, sickle tail, long, skinny neck. He had a nice disposition, but he had yellow eyes. He never had a coat. He was presumably the litterbrother of this gorgeous dog, Ch. Malschick. Then there was another one, a third brother, Boris; he was the bear type. He was the playmate of three children and he hated shows; he acted like nothing at a show, so it took him a long time to get his championship. After he got it, he was never shown again. He was a nice enough dog; he had a brown nose, light eyes, and those three were supposed to be brothers. And, as I say, nothing could have been more unlike.

Mrs. Romer's husband, who was, I think, a mate on a cargo boat, would bring a dog home with him every time he came home. He usually brought one that made its championship. Sometimes, he brought a terrible one. It was what he could



Park Cliff Snowpack Pandora. She had one puppy while THIS picture was being taken

get. We could take the dogs right over there on the ferry on a leash and breed them at New Haven to her dogs. Or, we could take them this other way, and breed them to the dogs down toward Fairfield, Connecticut. It was very easy. I always bred to champions if I bred outside. One of the dogs I bred to was Ch. Billy Boy owned by Mrs. Signe Hewlett. She just had this one, and he never had any coat. He was a good, strong, solid dog.

Oh, by the way, we always exchanged dogs; we didn't buy them, we exchanged a female for a male or whatever we needed. The Landover Maryland Kennels came up here and exchanged one of their dogs for Nantilka, who was a lovely dog, small, but she was a nice Sam. Going further down, I took one big male puppy down to Mrs. Stanley Matthews, another woman who never got any recognition for what she did for Sams. These are names not even familiar to you, and yet, they are the people that started the Sams. She brought over from England the Capensis dogs, and they were beauties. She had Fram of Farningham, Anchor of Farningham - I've forgotten all the names. That was 70 years ago! They were lovely dogs from the Farningham Kennels of Kilburn Scott.

The hurricane - I thought it was 1929, but they tell me it was before that - she had TB and lived in a real Florida house, if you know what they look like - plain board sides and just a roof. She had nine posts about three feet high that she chained the dogs to under her house. When the hurricane came, the dogs all drowned except three of her specials. She felt so terrible. Then, all she had left got distemper, the ones that she had in her house with her. She was very discouraged; she wrote to me and asked if I wanted them and I said yes. Well, they didn't come and they didn't come; she was trying to cure them of distemper, though I didn't know that. Finally, they came and one of them was dead in its crate. Anchor was there, the mother and Fram, the puppy. I had a terrible time with them, and of course, they gave my dogs distemper. That was in the Spring of 1930. In the fall, the Suffolk County Kennel Club gave its first dog show and I put Fram in. I had struggled so to keep the line that I liked and, to my surprise, he won the Working Group, out of the clear blue sky. That was the only time I showed him and he died before he could produce much of anything. I felt terrible to lose him. Then Mrs. Matthew died, and her son, who was in the Navy, wrote and said that the dogs they had left had been scattered around; they weren't any good. So that kennel

that had cost a fortune to start, went out of existence; they had brought all of those dogs over from England and struggled with them, then they lost them. This was the Capensis Kennels.

Mrs. Romer was there; we could go on a trolley to her house. Every one of her dogs was kenneled in a place almost as big as this place, with a doghouse with a flat roof. She never brought them in; she never combed them, never washed them, she never did anything. They were shown that way. If you liked a dirty dog, you gave it something; if you didn't like a dirty dog, you didn't give it anything. She had about nine or ten champion males. She got sick and then her husband died, like all of us. She sent some of them, who were paid for, to California. Then, this man in California sent for the rest of them; she even sent a dog that was so much in whelp that it had puppies on the way there. He never paid for them; he got all those dogs and their pedigrees without paying one cent. It broke her heart. I guess she was on her last legs anyway.

Amelia Price: Do you know who the man was?

Who had the kennel of long-legged, unkempt looking dogs? Well, you wouldn't know because you're all too young. This was in the early 40's. But that is where all those funny-looking Sams in San Diego came from - long legged, long eared, big eared dogs with ugly faces. That's the kind of dogs she raised. That's the kind of dog that the ugly dog of the three brothers I told you about came from. He was the ugliest looking dog I ever saw; all his puppies were ugly looking.

The Norka Kennels brought hip dysplasia in; the dogs were sold all over and they couldn't walk and were shown that way. Oh, it was terrible. She dumped them all on some poor woman who didn't know the difference. She started to show them and went broke, then, by and by, it was all cleared out. I'm interested to know, since I can't even see you two, about this blindness in Sams. I never heard of it.

Amelia: PRA.

What is it from?

Amelia: It's congenital.

But where did it come from?

Amelia: It's been there for years; you keep inbreeding and everyone keeps breeding. They are mixing their lines all the time, so eventually, you get problems. How did you deal with the dysplasia in those days? Did you have x-rays?

I x-rayed until I was poor; Dr. Rubens charged \$15 apiece, but they upped their charge to \$35 and we just x-rayed everything. If we couldn't do anything else, we'd do a



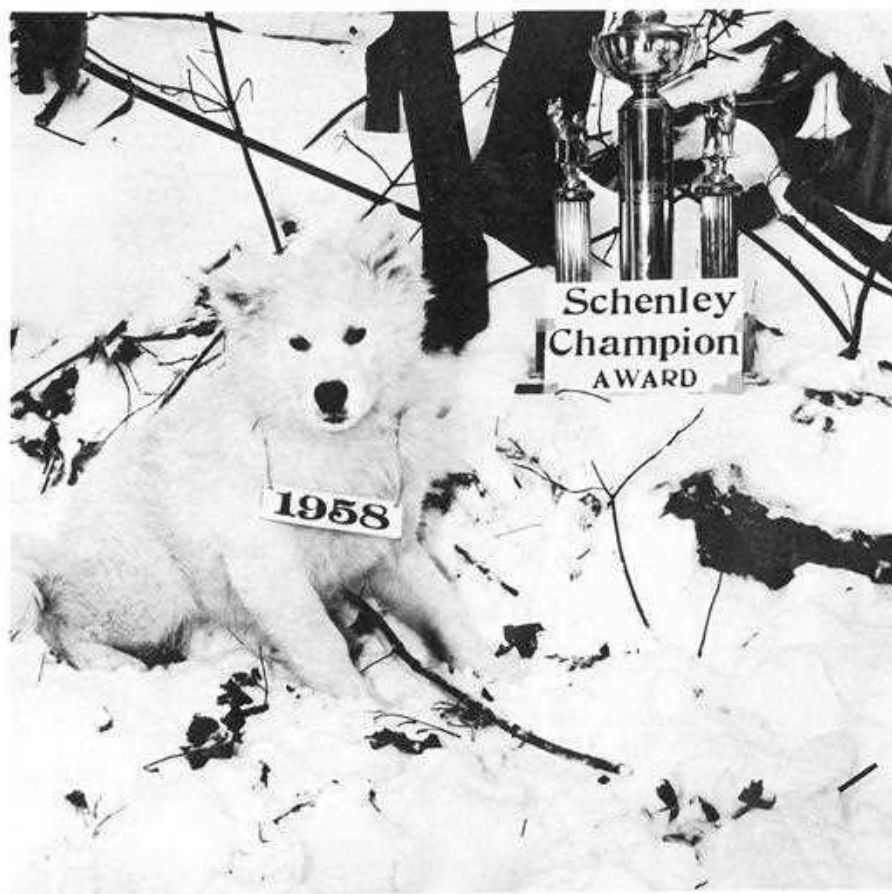
Imported Ch. Snowpack Thunder of Park-Cliff
(Ch. Prince Bado of Kobe x Ch. Joybelle of Kobe)



Judy, at the age of 3 1/2 months, 1st win at a puppy match



1958 publicity photos for the Schuley Dog Races.



dog that we thought was all right and keep two of them, and if they showed up, we figured it was all right until one of their puppies came. Now one of their dogs that had the worst - the dogs that had it were all English bloodlines, but you could get rid of it if you worked at it. If I had a dog that was so bad I could see there was something the matter, I didn't bother. Dr. Jones put down about 22 of my dogs. They either had dysplasia or, what was far worse, cancer in their hip. It probably was the cancer in the hip that gave them the hip dysplasia in the first place. Those were the English dogs I imported, so I got rid of them all. The only two I kept were cute little Patsy, who had hip dysplasia so every one of her puppies had it. But I never bred her after I found it out. That's the only way you can do anything with it - make up your mind to either harden your heart and put down the dog or have it spayed. That's what I did. If I loved the dog enough, I had it spayed. If I didn't, I had a nice little graveyard. One set of kennels I sold a long time ago, where I had the puppies, sold for \$40,000. If you ever wanted to see a gorgeous place, you ought to see this place. The other side, where the big dogs were, we sold last July for \$250,000. My mother had paid \$7,000 for it.



Park-Cliffe Snowpack Kim, 1966

Amelia: Is that the one that is up on the bluffs?

Yes; it's beautiful there.

Amelia: Most of your dogs lived to be very old, didn't they? There were some you put down when they were eighteen or nineteen years old.

Yes; there were plenty of them. I had one put to sleep a year ago by a new doctor. The dog was nearly 21 years old; he had cancer of the rectum. I'd had two operations done on him and that was enough. He was a dog with a big coat, but my dogs had such terrific coats and I don't know why because I never gave them anything special. I've had the same kennel man for thirty years; he always overfed the dogs until they were ready to drop dead. All I could tell him was that they would die in the heat, but it didn't make any difference.

Amelia: What's the average age of your dogs?

About 17 or 18. Too old. It's better if they die around 13 to 15. But they live forever. For instance, this dog's mother was thirteen when

she was born. I had a time! I had to get a certificate from the vet and everything else that goes with it. But another thing - they were never



Buc x Kara, 3 weeks, Christmas '70

sick. Right back of here, this piece of property comes down to the Shore Road, and in back of that was Dr. Blamey, who was head veterinarian of the American Kennel Club. As long ago as 1939 or 1940, he used to inoculate my dogs with live distemper vaccine and keep them away from everything else. I never lost one of them, and I've never (I'd better not say that!) had a case of distemper. But in 1922, I lost 22 Sams. The man next door came and buried them for me, so I never let that happen again. One bout of that is enough. I never had hard pad, whatever that is; I never had anything, and of course, I always wormed my dogs, but I wormed them myself.

Amelia: What did you use?

They won't let you have it anymore; those great big black pills that the vet used to use. I can't even buy them now; none of the veterinarians will sell them.

I'd like to hear some more about the history - that's really fascinating. We were about in the forties, I think.

Then the war came along, and I didn't do much. I drove an ambulance all during the war. I fed the dogs and that was about all. I didn't try to breed too many; I don't think I bred any. Then we went to Florida and I got tired of not doing anything. My husband took pictures of potato plants by the mile; we drove all the way to Florida to take those views of potatoes, acres and acres. I came back and found that he liked the dogs so much, so we started to raise them again. Of course, in many, many weekends, we have spent a thousand dollars on the dogs. That was nothing to him. If it was his dog, that was all there was to it!

We went all over Canada, Florida - everywhere. We had a handler, Dolores Scharf. This is what we took to Bermuda: the dogs were \$100 apiece to get on the plane; they were \$100 apiece in Bermuda; we took our handler, my husband and myself.

We had to have a cottage because we had the dogs; we had canvases spread on the floor so the dogs wouldn't do anything. We had our meals and our taxi - all that, but of course, I got Best of everything. I had two dogs with me. It is awfully hard to bring them to Bermuda - almost impossible. Don't go unless you have a lot of money and a lot of time. We had a very nice time; they made quite a fuss over us because we won all the prizes. The last thing my husband said he wanted was to put up a trophy case against that wall, to show all the trophies. He gave the order, but then he died suddenly, and I never got to do it.

Let me return to the old dogs. In 1929, I went to Florida and took this dog, Baranoff. We put him in a Miami dog show. There was an old German judge, and it was very haphazard and nobody showed up. I was judging something. We had such a time with those dogs. Mrs. Matthew

that had drowned.

Then there was Mrs. Radford. She had dogs for a long time. She had Siberian Chinki, and when the hurricane came into Rhode Island, the ferry being right there, they ran the dogs down to the ferry, put them on board and sent them over to me.



Park-Cliffe Snowpack Kim Kim, 1967
(Ch. Kara Sea's Silver Kim x Ch. Parke-Cliffe Snowpack Kim)

wasn't there with her imported dogs so nobody knew whose they were. Then my little dog came in and he got a prize and he went out for Mrs. Matthews. You see, I had given her the dog, taken it down there; she had it in her name, and I handled it. We had the most wonderful, wonderful dinner given to us. There were 22 white Poodles that were so much alike, there was absolutely no way of telling one from another. The judge got so angry he left the judging place, went down, counted all those dogs and what they were, even picked them up to make sure they were males and females, said he never saw so many good white Poodles in a bunch in his life. This woman had them all there. There were 22 white Poodles in this show of only 50 dogs! A male got first prize; I guess he was the only male there. This was one of those dogs

So I had all of those dogs here for about six months or a year and finally, I got them back to Mrs. Humphries who owned them, and the others. But Chinki I kept because he was different, a beautiful dog. He pulled me down the hill on my stomach on the end of a leash, all the way down here in the snow one time.

What was his full name?

Siberian Chinki. He had 14 points. I sent him to the Pittsburgh dog show to finish his point, and a police dog jumped over the barrier in back and took a chunk out of his back. Mrs. Day, who was my kennel woman, had him and couldn't get him to heal. He was there about a year or so, and I finally left him there. This is the Mrs. Day of the Cecil and Lillian Days who have the Days Inns now and are multi-millionaires. When we went to her house, she had

a little hand oil well at her back door that pumped less than a barrel of good oil a day. Cecil was a prospector. They were very poor. She lived in the house on the hill up there, and he was a wonderful carpenter. He did all the carpentry work there and they loved the dogs. When they finally got on their feet in Atlanta, I sent two or three dogs with them in an open car, and I never have heard a word from them since. I went to a Days Inn for a room and asked the room clerk about Mrs. Day. Well, they must have telephoned, because I only paid \$40 and was there a month! It was just enough to have a receipt. I think Mrs. Day has passed away, but that is what you call "bread on the waters." She had quite a few of my Sams, but when she was in Atlanta, she sent them all to Snowdrift Kennels. I bought a puppy from her for \$65 for a resale.

Amelia: What were the other kennels that were with you at the time?

There weren't many at that time. We shipped dogs back and forth for breedings. Mrs. Fowler, who did more work for the Sams than anybody will ever know, shipped all the way from Ohio to Connecticut to breed her dog every time. That was quite a chore in those days.

Amelia: What was her kennel name?

She had Lady Olga, the first dogs registered in the book. She bought that from me at five o'clock in the morning the day after the Sam Club show in 1923. She followed me home and bought the dog and took her back to Ohio in an open car; she was a puppy then. She bred her to Tobolsk the first year, Trip of Farningham the second year, Nico of Farningham the third. Then she took her dog out West, and she had a terrible-looking dog by her, sitting there with these books. Oh yes, Yurak was one of the kennels of



Laika, going to school with Anne.

those times. We can start at the beginning of the Samoyed Champion Pedigree book and I knew every one of those dogs, believe it or not.

You said there were some Sams that were black?

Yes, I have pictures of them. The first dog I imported from England, and you had to pay plenty - I went to Florida, and she was going to have puppies, so I said to the vet, "Take care of her, inoculate the puppies, worm them, do everything." When I came back, there were three black ones. I was so horrified, I gave them to the local dairy. Then, in 1950, I had left some of my dogs, while I went away, to another woman on a little country road. She had two black ones, but I wasn't sure they were real because the real estate man across the way said that her dogs were always getting out. I had them destroyed. I have pictures of the black ones, taken on an icy day out here - the girl had nothing on but a chiffon shift. We had to keep giving her whiskey to keep her from freezing while she was taking the pictures. That dog is an important dog, English, that a colored man brought over. They were so nasty they wouldn't let him in the Sam club, so he gave up all his dogs. He gave them to me, as a matter of fact.

I brought them over on the Queen Mary. In this picture you can see Thunder as a puppy - look at the size of him! And that's Patsy; they came in style, in a taxicab, and they ate out, too. They ate everything in the entire dining room the first night; they took the stuffing out of the back of everything. William said, "You'd better go down and see what those dogs are doing!"

Amelia: You had a litter of five black Sams you told me about.

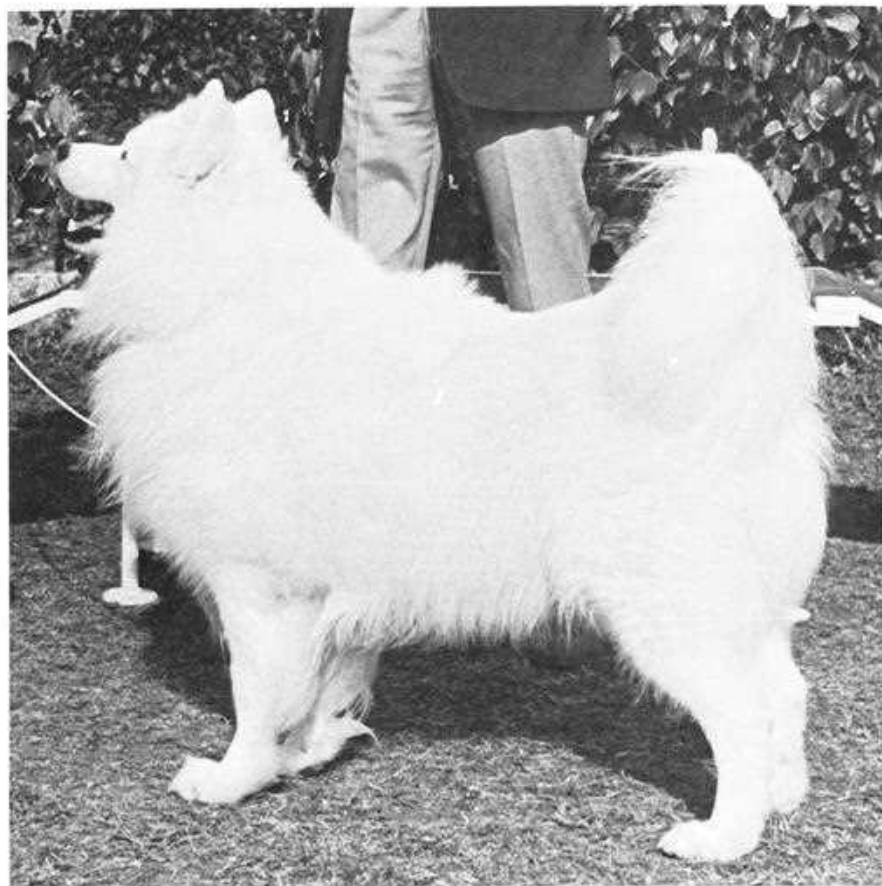
Three; they were around here for a long time. It's a beautiful dog. He was bigger than the rest of the litter and had big ears. He has that same bright look that some of the Sams used to have.

Amelia: You showed black Sams in the ring?

I showed one and was put out of the Sam club; he was a beauty, though. They just dropped me, then they put in that if the dog had a spot as big as a dime, they couldn't be shown, but it was too late for me!

Were there a lot of Sams with the black spots?

I wouldn't say there were a lot. There had been somebody who decided to breed them to Chows. Princess Minka was a beautiful white Sam who was a Chow. She had spots of red on her. I have a reproduction of a print of a dog around 1890, and basically, they haven't changed. They are exactly



Int Ch. Park Cliffe Snow Pack Flake

alike, but more groomed now; they have more coat. The dog in the picture was the best dog, all breed, in England in 1946. Her name was White Cloud and I paid \$900 for her. She had the most beautiful puppies you ever saw, but they all had either all or part hip dysplasia. That's why you see so few of anything from her line.

Did you ever come across any blue eyes?

Blue eyes, pink eyes - everything. Pink noses. One of the judges, or one of the handlers, used to sell blue-eyed and pink-eyed dogs out West, for good prices.

Did you breed ones with blue eyes?

Ch. Trip of Farningham came over and got his championship right away; I bred to him and had eight puppies; two males and two females had blue eyes. The dog I just told you about had pink-eyed puppies, really pink eyes and brown noses. She was an imported dog. Oh, you got everything in them. We got rid of all that junk, but it was terrible in those days. You had to breed to what you had, and they cost so much to get here, so you took a chance. I found the blue eyes were very easy to breed out. The pink eyes were a little harder, but they all bred out in

two generations. They probably showed up someplace, because I knew a handler who used to sell blue-eyed dogs out West for a big price; they were raging about it.

Amelia: She was the one that used to go around telling everybody that you had blue-eyed dogs.

Sure! What were you going to do? Chloroform them all? All you could do was have them spayed. The males didn't matter anyway, because they were just pets. Sure, I had blue-eyed dogs, Ch. Trip of Farningham's imported dogs. But if you pay a couple hundred dollars for a dog, and he turns out to have a litter of half brown-eyed and blue-eyed puppies, you take a chance and try breeding the brown-eyed offspring. Blue-eyed dogs practically never breed blue-eyed puppies. You could get rid of it very easily, and you had to do it, of course. I should say dozens of blue-eyed dogs over the years - not champions, but I had blue-eyed puppies. In fact, that is why Willy is here.

To be continued ...