

The Samoyed Dog



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Companion - Guardian - Reindeer
Herder and Sledge Dog

Some Background Facts

White as the snows of the Arctic Regions which gave it birth, the Samoyed recognized by historians as the oldest domesticated breed of dogs - comes to us from ancestors of trained guardian, companion and reindeer herding dogs. Histories and stories of the explorers of the Arctic and Antarctic Regions of centuries ago, all record the white dog of medium size, which played such an important role in the life of their owners - the Samoyeds. These people, inhabitants of the Samoyed Peninsula, an immense stretch of tundra and wasteland extending along the shores of the Arctic Ocean from the White Sea to the Yenesei River, were known as a Semi-nomadic tribe of mild, kindly, swarthy-skinned people. They were fishermen and herders of reindeer of the Arctic Regions. These people possessed an

extraordinary love for their dogs which they trained as excellent work dogs. It was upon their Samoyeds that they depended to assist in obtaining sustenance in this frozen land.

When not on the move, the natives lived in huts called chooms, in which their dogs shared even the beds of their masters.

The chooms were made of reindeer skins - and each choom had its own group of trained Samoyed dogs so valuable to their owners that explorers found it most difficult to purchase even one of their kind. Besides being trained in reindeer herding, they were used also as guard dogs, and for towing boats and at times sledges—in places where it was not possible to use the reindeer generally used for this purpose.

Origin of Our Present Day Samoyeds

It has long been stated that Antarctic Buck was the very first Samoyed to be imported into England. However, this is not so, as told in an article sent to me many years ago by Mrs. Kilbourn Scott, This item, reprinted in part from "The Queen" - the Lady's Newspaper of England, May 15, 1909, reads in part, "The breed was first in-

roduced into England by Mr. Kilbourn Scott a member of the Royal Zoological Society), in 1889—his first dog being bought from a tribe of Samoyeds in the Archangel province in North-East Russia and he gave the present name of Samoyed to the breed—(pronounced with the accent on “Sam”).

It was from this beginning, and further importations, that Mr. and Mrs. Kilbourn Scott founded their famous Farningham Kennels at Vale House, Burnt Ash-lane at Bromley, Kent, England. It was from these Kennels that so many of the explorers obtained stock for their continuing explorations. Later, realizing that a good outcross would greatly benefit the breed in England, Mr. Kilbourn Scott imported from Australia, a magnificent dog which had been one of the pack used by the explorer Borchgrevinck. This dog had been born on the Southern Cross when on her way to the Antarctic.

Again I quote: “He stands 21½ inches high at the shoulder - is 35 inches long. He has the fine open forehead, great ruff on neck, spreading tail and hair around the toes which are so characteristic of the breed. His fur is snowy white all over with a gloss on the hair

which is peculiar to the breed. (Ed. note: this is what we term the silver tip on the coat).

“He is a most lovable dog” and before being brought to England, he was shown to Jack London, (who wrote so charmingly on arctic dogs and their characteristics), who declared that Antarctic Buck as he was called, to be one of the finest Arctic dogs he had ever seen. So typical a Samoyed should be a great accession to the breed.” end of quote.

One has only to read of the hardships which these valiant veteran sledge dogs endured while working and giving their best on these Polar expeditions, to realize that only the hardiest and most fit could possibly survive the rigors of the stupendous work put upon them. Of the hundreds of valiant Samoyed dogs taken into the Arctic regions, only a very few returned. Most of the Samoyed strains in England and the United States are related to the veteran sledge dogs of these expeditions.

Samoyed Characteristics as We Know Them.

The Samoyed is an all-purpose dog, and easily adapts himself to any circumstance or environment. As a companion and playmate for children, he excels as a marvelous guardian, and will not desert his charge under any situation. His herding instincts induce him to keep a young wanderer well under guard, and many a story is told of a Samoyed having "herded" such a young wanderer safely home. As a SHOW dog, he ranks with the best.

The Samoyed is not by nature a quarrelsome dog, though able to hold his own if need be. Centuries of living in the chooms of his Samoyed masters, have imbedded in him a love of home—and if his folks are there, that is the spot where he loves to be.

Physical Characteristics

The Samoyed may be best termed as a medium sized dog of extreme beauty-gleaming white coat, which may or may not be tinged with cream or biscuit color—with sparkling dark eyes in a face of great intelligence and a look of deep understanding. Happiness seems to radiate from his

smiling face, to the tip of his plume-like tail. Lips and nose should be jet black by preference, and black may even extend into the roof of his mouth.

The coat when brushed, seems to glisten with silver—heavy powdering or whitening of the coat often indulged in for show purposes, is not favored as it tends to kill that silver gleam. Bathing is not a necessity under general conditions. A good brushing once or twice a week will keep it in excellent condition.

One more very important item - when you brush that coat of your Samoyed: Be sure to save all the wool substance.

It is better than Sheep's-wool for making socks, sweaters, suits, beanies, etc.

In general appearance, the Samoyed is handsome and bold-looking, while his sloping shoulders and well bent hocks indicate speed and free and true action when running.

The basic training of a Sam used for sled work by explorers of the Arctic regions could apply to any present day Sam.

The wise driver or owner must first get to know his dog and teach it to

know him, and to recognize him as Master.

It is a known fact that a normal Samoyed has a mind of his own and exerts ways in which to obey and yet keep his dignity. The secret is to impress upon him that an order once given must be obeyed.

If a mature Samoyed is a creature of extreme beauty — a Samoyed puppy will win over any obstacle. He resembles a white teddy-bear, a fascinating little creature with a soft fluffy coat and beady dark eyes. As he grows older, he loses the wooly coat, his ears become erect and the hair becomes longer, with densely outstanding ruff on his neck, covering an undercoat of soft wool-like texture. One of the most desirable characteristics of the Samoyed as a companion dog is the complete lack of doggy odor about him.

In conclusion, if you want a dog as a companion for any purpose whatever, for work or play, you will find the Samoyed fulfills that purpose. Wherever known, he is a genuine favorite, thoroughly reliable, intelligent and true to his noble ancestry.

Thirty-five years of Samoyed companionship have forever endeared the breed to this owner.