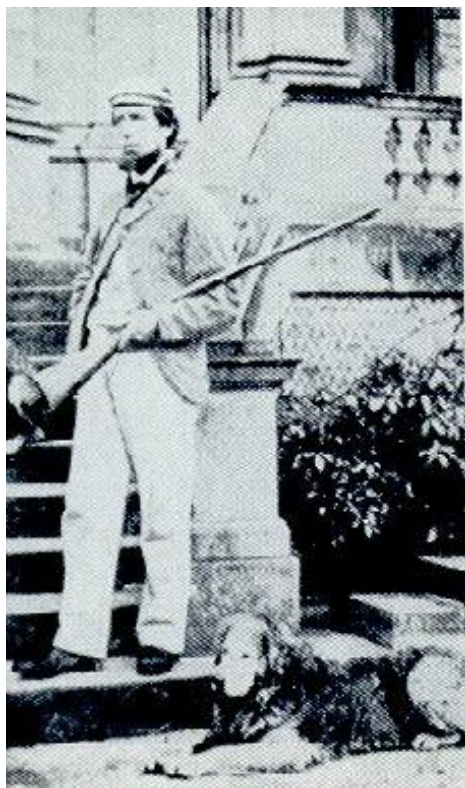


A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

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In the 1800s in Scotland and England, hunting was both sport and a practical way of obtaining food. Retrievers became popular when the breech-loading shotgun demanded an efficient retrieving dog for both waterfowl and upland game. All retriever breeds can trace back to the water-loving St Johns dog of Newfoundland, ancestor of the wavy-coated retriever which contributed to both the Flat-Coat and the Golden.



Nous with gamekeeper at Guisachan

The most complete records of the origin of the Golden Retriever are included in the record book kept from about 1840 until 1890 by Dudley Marjoribanks, first Lord Tweedmouth, at his Guisachan estate in the Scottish Highlands. These records were made public in 1952 by Lord Tweedmouth's great-nephew, the sixth Lord Ilchester. Further information and additional pedigree research was published by Elma Stonex.

In 1865 Dudley Marjoribanks bought "Nous", the single yellow pup in a litter of black wavy-coated retrievers. Photos of Nous show a handsome, sturdy dog with a wavy coat, quite recognizably a Golden. Nous was bred with Belle, a Tweed Water Spaniel, resulting in four yellow pups that became the foundation of the breed. Through several generations of clever breeding, Marjoribanks created a consistent line of exceptional working retrievers. To the main line from Nous and Belle, he added another Tweed Water Spaniel, a couple of black wavy-coated retrievers, and a red setter, retaining primarily the yellow pups. Working ability and retrieving aptitude were paramount, requiring a strong, biddable dog that could withstand cold and cope with the demanding terrain of the Highlands.

The now extinct Tweed Water Spaniel was native to the east coast of southern Scotland, particularly in the area of the Tweed River near Berwick, and was used both to retrieve game and to assist fishermen. The Tweed spaniels were "light liver" in color, with a fairly short, close-curl'd coat only slightly feathered. "Liver" at that time could be used to describe anything from dark brown to light sandy color. Stanley O'Neill, the Flat-Coat historian, described them as more retriever than spaniel in appearance.



Culham Brass delivers to game-keeper's hand (UK, circa 1908)

Some of the Tweedmouth retrievers were given to friends and relatives, but the strain remained largely unknown until after 1900. The winner of the first field trial for retrievers, in 1904, was sired by a Tweedmouth dog. A few "yellow retrievers" were registered with the Kennel Club as "Retrievers (Wavy or Flat-Coated)", but did not appear in dog shows until 1908, in classes for Flat-Coats "of any other color". One of the earliest exhibitors, Mrs. W. M. Charlesworth, was nearly single-handedly responsible for recognition of the "Goldens" in their own right, in 1913.



BIS Am. Can. Ch Speedwell Pluto

While some Goldens were brought to North America between before either the American Kennel Club or the Canadian Kennel Club officially recognized the breed, the first Golden was registered by the AKC in 1925. But the real foundation sire of the Golden Retriever here was Am. Can. Ch. Speedwell Pluto, whelped in 1929 in England and imported by Col. Samuel Magoffin (Rockhaven Kennels) to British Columbia. Through further importations and family connections, Goldens became established before World War II in several areas of the USA, and after the War, grew steadily in popularity, with a pronounced surge of registrations in the 1970s.

While the Golden's kindly expression and distinctive "double" golden coat are appealing, his natural qualities of amiable temperament, trainability, willingness, useful size, and sturdy physique have equipped him for a variety of practical uses in addition to that of personal hunting dog; among them, guide dog for the blind, assistance/service dog, Search and Rescue, and tracking and scenting specialist. In organized dog sports the breed is widely popular in Obedience Trials (the first three Obedience Trial Champions were Goldens), Hunting Tests and Agility. Registrations of Goldens have remained in the "top ten" of all breeds for years, attesting to their popularity as companion as well as a worker.



Goldens from the Rockhaven Kennels (mid/late 1930's)