

## A History Lesson -The First Recognized Epagneul Bretons



The French Club de L'Épagneul Breton was founded in 1907. Soon thereafter, the first proposed conformation standard for the breed was composed by the founders and proposed to include black in the coat as an acceptable color. This first proposal for an official conformation standard was rejected by the French Kennel Club (Société Centrale Canine a/k/a “SCC”), as they had a specific objection to allowance of black in the coat. After rejection of the first proposed conformation standard, a similar revision excluding black in the coat was approved by the SCC in 1908. Although breed historians agree that breed representatives have always carried the genetics for black in the coat since the earliest days, this “official” prohibition in the French breed standard remained unchanged until a revision of the official breed standard was accepted by the SCC in 1956. This important change for the Epagneul Breton occurred during Mr. Gaston Pouchain’s tenure as President of the SCC. Mr. Pouchain was a stalwart supporter of the breed, and also served as President of the CEB-France from 1956 to 1982.

Nonetheless, Epagneul Breton breed representatives appeared in field trials, shows, and were actually registered by the SCC prior to formal establishment of the French CEB and prior to formal enactment of the breed standard in 1908. In 1896, an Epagneul Breton or “Brittany” by the name of Pincon Royale was exhibited in a show. He was a male tricolor owned by the Viscount de Combourg of Bretagne Province. Pincon Royale was exhibited in the “epagneul” or “spaniel with a wavy coat” category of “any variety” of the 1896 Paris Dog Exposition. It is unknown whether Pincon Royale’s coat was that of a black or liver, in addition to the orange and white. Two years later in 1898, a liver and white Epagneul Breton female named Myrrha d’Amorique won a first place in a French field trial. In terms of the first official registrations in France which were recorded by the French Kennel Club, an orange and white male by the name

of “Boy” was registered under SCC Reg. No. LOF 11 609 with a date of birth on 2/08/1905. “Marpha” a liver and white female was next registered under SCC Reg. No. LOF 11 610 with a date of birth of 3/24/1903. Among the first three hundred (300) Epagneul Breton registrations with the SCC, the liver and white coat was far more popular than the orange and white, which became popular later in the 1930’s.

*Source: Mr. Pierre Willems of France, 2007 Article for Norwegian Brittany Club entitled “The History of the Epagneul Breton”, republished on Forum De L’Epagneul Breton at [www.epagneul-breton.org](http://www.epagneul-breton.org)*