November 13, 2013

To the “Old Timers Committee” members:

I am pleased to announce that the “Old Timers Committee”, comprised of members of our Board of Directors, has voted to induct Louis A. Thebaud into our Hall of Fame.

Some time ago, Steve Ralph brought to Rick’s attention that Mr. Louis A. Thebaud was not a member of the Brittany Field Trial Hall of Fame. We can only surmise that he was overlooked when the first round of dogs and people were inducted years ago.

Mr. Thebaud’s induction was heartily endorsed by many members of the Board; his biography is attached for your information.

We hope each of you can join us next February for the ceremonies as we honor Shambo’s Dark Shadow, Louis A. Thebaud and Rick Smith.

Thank you,

Mary Crawford
Corresponding Secretary

“To be enshrined in a Hall of Fame is the greatest achievement in the field trial sports.”
I nominate Louis Andre Thebaud to the Brittany Field Trial Hall of Fame. I believe that if it were not for Louis A. Thebaud importing the first Britannys into North America and getting AKC to agree to recognize the Brittany Spaniel in August, 1934, we would not have the Brittany that we enjoy today in America nor would there be an American Brittany Club.

Contributions:
- Louis A. Thebaud imported the first Brittany's into North American and accomplished getting the Brittany recognized and admitted to the AKC stud book in 1934.
- Louis A. Thebaud was the first president of the Brittany Spaniel Club of North America (now the American Brittany Club), which was founded in 1936.

Mr. Thebaud is long overdue for induction into our Hall of Fame. He should now be recognized for his contributions to our breed.

Steve Ralph

Bill & I feel honored to be included in the group of people endorsing the nomination of Louis Thebaud to the Brittany Field Trial Hall of Fame. He assuredly has the proper credentials and should be inducted as soon as possible.

When he brought Brittany Spaniels to the United States, there was no Brittany Club, and no AKC field trials. He and his Brittany friends approached the FDSB and asked for their criteria for field trialing. They were given a group of instructions for running a field trial, and Standards of Performance. From these requirements, a formula was created for American Kennel Club field trialing. After the Brittany Club and American Kennel Clubs came to a consensus on Field Trialing, they had field trials in most of the Sporting Breeds of the AKC.

Thus, one might say Louis Thebaud was also responsible for AKC Sporting Breed Field Trials in the USA.

Rheta and Bill Cartmell
Louis A. Thebaud

Louis Andre Thebaud was born Oct. 24, 1859 at Oragne, NJ and died in 1939.

Louis A. Thebaud, an importer/exporter, was also a sportsman and philanthropist. He was responsible for introducing Brittany Spaniels and Wirehaired Pointing Griffon in the United States and funded the building of the maternity ward to All Souls Hospital where he was also a director. During WWI he provided space to a local group known as the "Trench" which made surgical dressings and other medical supplies needed in the war effort.

Louis A. Thebaud imported Brittany Spaniels into the United States in 1933. Upon Mr. Thebaud’s request the French Kennel Club sent him the "Standard of Perfection" for the breed in July, 1934. Jacques Joubert and Louis Thebaud went to the American Kennel Club to try to get the breed recognized and admitted to the stud book. They took with them two dogs – Edir du Mesnil and Gennette du Mesnil. As a result, the board of directors of the American Kennel Club recognized the Brittany Spaniel in August, 1934, but did not approve the standard until March 12, 1935, after an acceptable translation of the standard had been completed. The Brittany Spaniel Club of North America was founded in 1936 and it received official membership in the AKC on September 15, 1936.
Louis A. Thebaud was the first president of the Brittany Spaniel Club of North America.

In September of 1934 Mr. Thebaud imported Fanche du Cosquerou (by Saic du Cosquerou ex Dicta du Cosquerou) through the efforts of his nephew, Rene Joubert. Fanche du Cosquerou has the first recorded Brittany placement in a trial --- April 20, 1935, Jockey Hollow Club Trials, Shooting Dog Stake -- 8 pointers, 15 setters and 3 Brittanies. Fanche placed third. Both Fanche and Mr. Joubert were to prove of prime importance in the development of the Brittany. Fanche sired a good many of the early trial winners, as well as being a winner himself.

Gwennec de l'Argoat and his full sister Etoile (whelped April 6, 1932), were imported in 1936 by Louis A. Thebaud. Gwennec became a major stud force in the U.S. and later was inducted in the Hall of Fame.
Louis A. Thébaut is considered a legend among American Brittany fanciers. He was one of the first to bring the breed to North America and played a major role in the breed's rise to prominence in the field and on the show bench.

One of the great names among the first Britannies in the United States was that of Franche du Cosquerou (above)—Louis Thébaut's favorite hunting dog. The famous dog portrait photographer Rudolph Tauskey took this picture of Franche at the request of the American Kennel Club to represent the breed in the 1936 Edition of The Complete Dog Book. Franche subsequently became the property of René Joubert.
Learn about the contributions of sportsman and philanthropist Louis Thebaud who was instrumental in bringing Brittanys in America.

By Amy Fernandez | July 24, 2012

Louis Thebaud

Sportsman and philanthropist Louis Thebaud was instrumental in the Brittany’s recognition. With his immense family fortune he could have easily imported them simply for personal use, but he was determined to get the breed accepted as a dual-purpose dog in America.

The Thebaud family tree combined French nobility and American ambition. Its founder started an import business after the Revolutionary War that kept generations of Thebauds in high style. By the late 1800s the family home was a 300-acre estate in affluent Morristown, N.J.

Born in 1859, Louis grew up as American gundogs and field trials came of age. Morristown was an enclave of wealthy sportsmen who spent lavishly importing superb field trial dogs. After retirement, this dedicated sportsman devoted himself to hunting and travel. At his seaside retreat on the Brittany coast Continental gundogs inevitably caught his eye. He began importing Wirehaired Pointing Griffons in 1905.

The Brittany was a local secret. First shown in France in 1896, it was still a novelty in the 1930s. Louis thought its versatility and steadiness were ideal for quail hunting back home. Thanks to family connections, his scheme to import quality Brittany stock was feasible. Then living in France, Rene Joubert is often called Louis’s nephew. He was more distantly related, but called Louis uncle and shared his passion for gundogs.

Joubert began sending Louis important Brittanys in 1931. In 1933 he sent over Genette du Mesnil in whelp. Louis immediately shipped her to the Avandale Springer kennel in Winnipeg to whelp North America’s first Brittany litter. Dog shipping was then extremely costly, risky and slow but this unusual step ensured two foundation strains. In 1934, Franche du Cosquerou arrived, reputedly France’s finest field Brittany. After mating Genette, he was shipped to Winnipeg and bred to her daughters. These litters
produced some of the breed's first field trial winners. Louis' next significant import, in 1935, was Fenntus du Cosquerou, widely admired for intensity, drive and steadiness.

Meanwhile, the pair managed AKC recognition with one trip to 51 Madison Avenue. Despite the miniscule gene pool, nonexistent club and incomprehensible French standard, AKC accepted Brittany Spaniels in 1934. In 1936, Louis became first president of the Brittany Spaniel Club of North America (now the American Brittany Club).

AKC recognition was a walk in the park compared to convincing skeptical hunters. Louis used his connections to interest wealthy sportsmen in the breed. The publisher of American Field also received a puppy as a gift. Everyone agreed that Brittanys were great upland bird dogs. Their trainability and size also made them appealing pets, a bigger consideration as large kennels were replaced by amateur sport hunters who kept their dogs as pets.

However, personal endorsements didn't have the impact of field trial wins. The Brittany’s street cred hung on its acceptance by Pointer/Setter loyalists. Although AKC classified it as a spaniel, they considered it a field trial pointing breed. In 1936, Louis sent Fenntus to Joubert, who was then living in Detroit. He entered her in an upcoming trial where she placed second. The following year she became the first Brittany to defeat Pointers and Setters at a field trial. This was an amateur stake, but the point was made. Henry Stackpole writing in 1949 said “the Brittany has a prominent place in the American sporting scene…There are several field trials for these dogs but fanciers do not hesitate to enter them against Pointers and Setters, especially in shooting stakes where excessive range is not desirable.” In 1939, Michigan’s first all-Brittany Stake drew 14 entries. Louis died that year at age 79.

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