

in America 100 Years Ago and the Founding of DCA

By Cheryl Steinmetz

The Dalmatian Club of America is indeed fortunate to have had many members and Historians who have cared enough to diligently collect and protect valuable documents, books, and pictures concerning our breed and our club. In 1998, with the initial assistance of Esme Treen, our archives were vastly increased when John Orr, son of Dalmatian breeder and DCA activist Paula Orr Homiller, worked with Historian Cindy Ingalls and donated his vast

collection of breed and club material to DCA. (Mrs. Homiller, of Tattoo Kennels, was active in our breed during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. More than twenty-two percent of all Dalmatian Champions between 1928-1944 were owned or bred by Tattoo.) Within the Tattoo Collection was a copy of the first Dalmatian book published in the United States (H. Fred Lauer's 1907 *The Dalmatian*), 1906 & 1907 show catalogs belonging to DCA founder J. Sergeant Price, Jr., and a copy of Watson's 1906 *The Dog Book*.

Mr. Lauer was a DCA founding member, and James Watson was an early dog show enthusiast. Here's what they said 100 years ago about Dalmatians and the Dalmatian Club of America, and here are photos of some of our early winners.

The Dog Book by James Watson 1906

"In looking up the career of the Dalmatian as a show dog in this country it is somewhat surprising to find New York without classes for the breed for many years after they were provided at many other



*Very truly yours
H. Fred Lauer.*

Mr. H. Fred Lauer, one of the founding members of DCA, and author of the first Dalmatian book published in the United States.

shows. As far as San Francisco and Los Angeles we have records of winning Dalmatians when New York provided nothing for the breed, and it was not until 1896 that the premier show of the country opened classes for Dalmatians. There was not

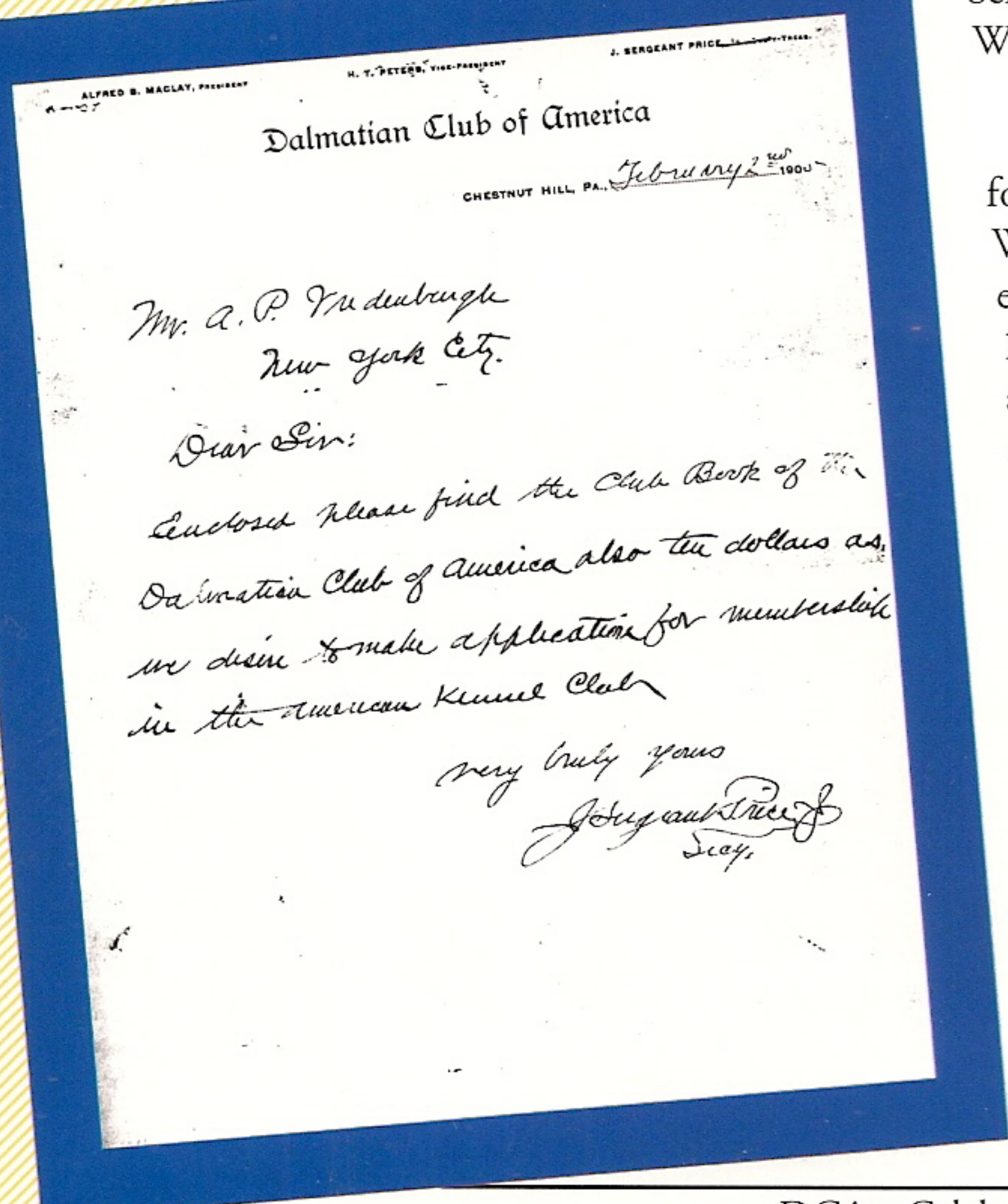
IN MEMORIAM



J. SERGEANT PRICE, JR.

A Founder of the Dalmatian Club of America
and
Honorary Vice President

Memoriam page from the 1949 DCA Specialty catalog. According to an article written in 1954 by long-time DCA secretary, Mrs. Flora Bonney, Mr. Price was the only founding member to remain a member until his death in 1948.





Ch. Edgecomb D'Artagnan, an American bred one, is a good type and has conformation to stand road work. He is a grand sire of well marked puppies.

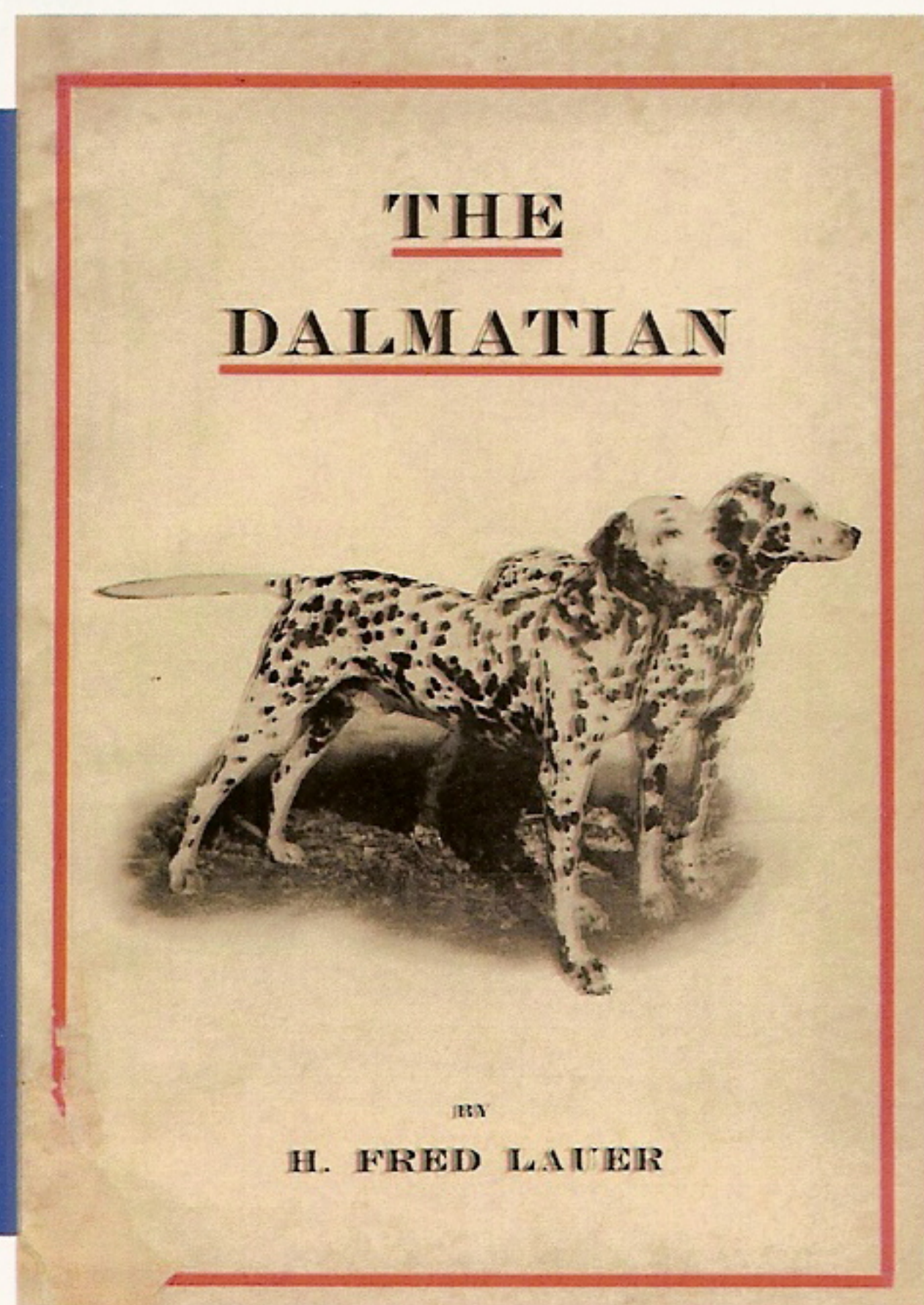
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Ch. Edgecomb D'Artagnan (dob 6/9/1902). According to the DCA's The Official Book of the Dalmatian, this was the first Dalmatian Champion recorded by the AKC (recorded in 1904).

much support, however, until Doctor Lougest added them to his Mastiff and Bloodhound kennels, and with a few passably good dogs, had matters his own way for a year or two. Mr. Martin and Mr. Sergeant Price, of Philadelphia, then took up the breed, and just before the first shows

of the present year Mr. J. B. Thomas, Jr. of Simsbury, and Mr. H. T. Peters, of Islip, L.I. decided to add Dalmatians to those they were individually connected with – Russian Wolf Hounds and Beagles – and formed a partnership known as the Windy Valley Kennels. They started in with the greatest enthusiasm, and getting together as many of the fanciers of Dalmatians as possible, a club was organised [sic] to foster the breed. This was followed by application for a good classification at the New York Show, and, Mr. Peters being on the show committee of the Westminster Kennel Club, the response was the opening of five classes, for which a surprisingly good entry resulted. The successful dogs were for the most part from England, and were beyond question an improvement on what we have been in the habit of seeing at American shows.”

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Gracing the cover of Mr. Lauer's 1907 book are Blanco (dob May 22, 1900) and Ch. Spotted Diamond (dob Nov. 1901). Both were owned by Thomas Wark.



Ch. Runaway, the international champion, considered the best dog in America. Owned by John Minturn, New York City.

Ch. Rockcliffe Runaway (dob 2/26/1901). According to Lauer's narrative, this was the best Dalmatian in America in 1907. In the '06 and '07 catalogs, he was Winners Dog at several shows in multi-dog competition. At the time, no breed win was given unless there was a special award. His owner advertised him as having "defeated every dog or bitch in America, and has won 31 first prizes." Rockcliffe Kennels was owned by DCA founding member John Minturn. ¹Westchester KC First Annual Show, June 1, 1907.



Ch. Spotted Diamond of Edgecomb Kennels, Chestnut Hill, Pa., as well as being a show specimen, she is an elegant worker with a team.

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The Dalmatian by H. Fred Lauer 1907

"One comes to the conclusion that the progress made by the Dalmatian is little short of marvelous; the improvement in the Dalmatian himself and the strides he has made in public favor have been quite exceptional, and in the four years just past the Dalmatian may fairly claim to have been more in the public eye than ever before.

"The entries at nearly all the principal shows have been not only strong in numbers, but what is far more important, have been excellent in quality, and some cases indeed as at New York, Philadelphia, Wissahickon, and several others, the winners have been difficult to separate, especially at Philadelphia in 1905 and New York and Wissahickon in 1906. At Wissahickon, two of the best bitches in the country, Ch. Spotted Diamond and Gedney Farm Dreadnought, met in open and winners classes, the former defeating the latter under Mr. Terry as Judge. Ch. Rockcliffe Runaway is supposed to be the best Dalmatian in America today, although he is an imported one, he has been beaten by a home bred one, Ch. King at New York in 1906.

"In the year 1904, enthusiastic breeders and fanciers of this scarce variety of dog got together and formed a club whose sole

ambition and object is the perpetuation of the Dalmatian and to increase his fading fortunes. Its purpose is novel to say the least and the organization will be the only one of its kind in America. The name of the club is 'The Dalmatian Club of America.' It is established with a view to promote the breeding of pure Dalmatians; to define precisely and publish a definition of true type; and to urge the adoption of such type on breeders, fanciers, Judges, dog show committees, etc., as the only recognized and unvarying standard by which Dalmatians ought to be judged, which may in the future be uniformly accepted as the sole standard of excellence in breeding and in awarding prizes of merit to Dalmatians and (giving prizes, supporting shows, and taking other steps) to do all in its power to protect and advance the interest of the breed. The Officers of the club at the time of its organization were;

Ch. Spotted Diamond was the first champion bitch confirmed by AKC (dob Nov. 1901). She was owned by Thomas Wark.



The first winner of a DCA medallion was Rockcliffe Lady Florine who won for 'best dog or bitch bred in the United States or Canada.' It was offered at the Chester Kennel Club, May 19, 1906.

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President, Alfred B. Maclay; Vice President, H.T. Peters; Secretary and Treasurer, J. Sergeant Price, Jr. The latter being an ardent admirer and breeder of the Dalmatian and the founder of this club."