DCA - 1905-2005
A Centennial Celebration

By Cheryl Steinmetz

In 1905, a Field and Fancy magazine article about Windy Valley Dalmatians and the new Dalmatian Club of America quoted DCA vice-president Harry T. Peters on the history and versatility of the Dalmatian breed.

"In the old days," Peters stated, "the sporty appearance of the Dalmatians was responsible for their wide distribution through Europe. All who made the grand tour travelled on horseback or in coaches, and these dogs were favorites as guards and travelling companions."

"The firemen," he continued, "have done more to keep the Dalmatian from dying out during the past 100 years."

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Detail from Francesco Castiglioni's "Hunting Dogs and their Attendants," circa 1695.

Painting by John Collet, circa 1770, from the book The Dalmatian, By Eleanor Franklin. From the author's collection.

Clarence Boersma, his bride, Miss Faith Spitzer, and their Seeing Eye dog, Nessel, which led blind ex-marine down aisle of First Reformed church for wedding ceremony last night.

From the Chicago Tribune, circa 1940. Courtesy DCA Historian Collection.

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From the Chicago Tribune, circa 1930. Duke the Dalmatian, owned by Dan Koutras, trailed and harassed a burglar suspect in Gary, Indiana with his master. Courtesy DCA Historian Collection.

A Dalmatian in a stable with spotted horses, 1588. From Dalmatians in Canada.

Gun dog and Partridges by Phillip Ferdinand de Hamilton, 1664-1750. From Dalmatians in Canada.

Life magazine, early 1940s. The Boston Fire Department Dalmatians were trained for rescue for fire and war emergencies. From the DCA Historian Collection.
Dalmatians Do Everything

This follow seems to take a protective interest in kitty... Up in Mrs. and Mrs. Horwood's Ford, a Dalmatian is to be awarded the U.D. and U.D.T. degrees... Trial of Dal, interesting perfect teamwork under a high-wheeled Manchester cart... Sandy tail only reveals the rest of the dog in the rear... Just as the teamsters did, too... Roadster Cocoa, U.D.T. only Ever Dalman to finish the degree... 36 Topper of Bursley, CD.X., does for his picture as the proud partner of a team of six... "Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Rees... working out a pair of their Dalmatians... preparation... Kenwood, Nun's Ghosts, U.D.T..." fur coat of a lion... "Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Rees... working out a pair of their Dalmatians... preparation... Kenwood, Nun's Ghosts, U.D.T..."

Lt. Col. Willy Neckter, a renowned trainer of war dogs, and one of his performing Dalmatians. From the DCA Historical Collection.

its eclipse from fashion than the stablemen...the firemen speak in high terms of the courage and fidelity of the spotted dogs."

"As a companion," Peters continued, "the Dalmatian is unequalled, owing to the many uses to which he may be put. He can be broken as a pointer, he will even run a rabbit, if need be. He will follow his master all day on foot, or after a carriage, and will be interested in everything that is going on."

Throughout history, the Dalmatian has been many things to many people and we expect the breed's versatility to continue on for the next 100 plus years... as companion, coach dog, hunter, ratter, circus performer, guard, firedog, show dog, war dog, tracker, artist's inspiration, obedience dog, performance competitor... companion.