

History of the Český Fousek

by

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The Český Fousek has been called an ancient breed, and in a way it is, with records tracing back over centuries. But in other respects, it's a new breed, having been finally recognized by the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI) in May 1963. More than simply a database of pedigrees, the background of this bushy-faced hunter is a story of cultures, politics, wars, and resilience. The Český Fousek is both a distinctive breed in its own right and a key contributor to the genetics of other versatile rough coated gun dogs.

The oldest records of a hunting dog generally called "fousci" (bearded/whiskered) are preserved in Karlštejn castle from the time of The Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (1316-1378). The first king of Bohemia, Charles IV, was born in Prague. He was an avid sportsman, and was fluent in several languages including Czech, Latin, French, German, and Italian (There were many dialects at that time.). Prague became his capital, as it remained untouched by the plague. His rule was what has been called the

Golden Age of Bohemia. There are multiple records from Charles IV where he writes about hunting incidents. For example, when he was hunting for deer with his Czech hunting dogs, he jumped into a pool and the dogs followed him. With a big whimper they immediately got out of the water because it was hot. Thus, the discovery of a hot healing spring, later the spa town of "Karlovy Vary" was established. There is a report of a gift of "Canis Bohemicus" to Margrave Ludwig of Brandenburg, although the exact time frame of that gift is uncertain. Gifts of hunting dogs all over the region were common among nobles, and many of these dogs were exported throughout the central European region. However, it is unlikely these were what we would now call a pointing dog - but were an early ancestor of our breed.



„Grosser (französischer) Barbet.“

Hidinger Band VI, Bl. 44.

Rough-coated hunting dog
(Kadich 1888)

Bohushlav Balbín (1621-1688- Prague) wrote a series of six volumes about the Czech lands published 1679-1687. Chapter 62 describes the Czech hunting dogs and the kennels of the time. The next important work is by Johan Fredrich von Fleming, *Der vollkommene teutsche Jäger*, (1724) where he also describes a Bohemian hunting dog, although no details are provided. Up until this time there was very little specific breed development, and these dogs had a great deal genetic variation.

The Czech lands were under the rule of the Holy Roman Empire, Hapsburgs, Austrian Empire, and then the Austro-Hungarian Empire for about 300 years until the end of WWI. During this time there was a gradual change to Germanization of language for the ruling classes. As a result, these Czech rough coated hunting dogs became called by the German name of Stichelhaar (prickly hair) or later by the name “Hessian Rough-beards” or “Czech Pointers”. By whatever name used, the original stock for these dogs came from what is now the Czech lands.

The earliest real description of a pointing dog called a “Fousek” is in a book by the Czech Dr. Hanns von Kadich, *Der stichelhaarige deutsche Vorstehhund*, published 1888. The author includes a number of letters, including one from “one of the oldest and wisest hunters in our country, and it is the only detailed description of the old stichelhärig bird dog, as he knew it in the first decades of our century”

The color of the rough-coated pointer, as I see it before me from my childhood days, was a sometimes lighter, sometimes darker ash gray, with innumerable brown spots, sprinkles, dots, and plates throughout. Especially the large brown plates were sprinkled with white hair and thus truly ‘gestichelt’. To the Bohemian and Moravian pheasant hunters who preferably hunted with these dogs this indefinable color was the only right one. In pure stock the coat was always harsh, each hair as spry as glass, the whole body *not* woolly rough. Only the head had pronounced furnishings and thus somewhat longer and softer fur, the reason for also calling the dog “Fousek”, the bearded one. The top of the head and the neck were rather smooth. Rough like a poodle and woolly were only dogs of unknown descent, preferably used for hunting in water and simply called ‘water dogs’.

The description goes on to detail the shape of the head and coat on the body and head. This description would be from very early 1800s or late 1700s. This is only about 75 years after the publication of *Der vollkommene teutsche Jäger*, indicating that it is likely the Bohemian and Moravian “Fousek” were used as pointing dogs since at least the mid - to late 18th century.

Dr. von Kadich’s book has a number of other letters with memories of breeders and hunters dating from the early 1830s with more information about the rough coated pointers giving height and the pedigree of some early dogs with many references to Bohemia and Moravia as well as the use of the name “Fousek”.

The period of rapid breed development came during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In Germany, the Stichelhaar became a popular hunting dog and was the basis for the development of the Korthals Griffon. Franz Bontant was a devotee of the Stichelhaar and many old studbook records show that the Stichelhaar was instrumental in the eventual development of the Drahthaar. So, we see that those old Czech dogs became the genetic basis for several rough-coated Central European Pointing breeds.

Organized cynological activity ushered in an era for breeding specialized dogs often for

national pride. In 1880 the “Association for breeding and training of dogs in the Czech Kingdom” was established in Prague. In 1882, Josef Černý, a Forest-master from Beroun, writes the first accepted Český Fousek breed standard. Soon thereafter dog trials were popular, and the larger, slower, Fousek competed against English pointers and “pointerized” German short-haired pointers that were very popular at that time. Versatility was not considered because the contemporary trials organized were almost entirely field trials. Thus, it is understandable that the Český Fousek subsequently started to be forgotten in the dog trial world.

Breed registries for sporting dogs arose in this time frame. In 1886 the “Czech registry of dog breeds” was established and listed:

- 19 pointers
- 17 English setters
- 9 Irish setters
- 17 Gordon setters
- 2 griffons
- 81 short-haired pointers
- 41 coarse-haired pointers– Fouseks
- 32 smooth-haired dachshunds
- 4 long-haired dachshunds
- 30 Hannover blood-hounds
- 1 English retriever
- 8 smooth-haired greyhounds
- 2 borzois
- 10 foxhounds

Later, this breed registry merged with the Vienna breed registry (Österreichische Hundestammbuch- or the ÖHStB). It was still all in the German language.

The “Association for coarse-haired pointers- Český Fousek for the Czech Kingdom with premises in Písek” was organized and founded in 1896 by Ferdinand Sekyrka, a forester, a professor at the forestry school in Písek, and a patriot independent of the nobility. Part of their mission was to preserve and spread the Český Fousek breed. However, this group was quickly dissolved by the Austrian Monarchy because it did not use the German language in its reports.

From its inception in 1883 through 1924, the ÖHStB listed numerous rough-coated pointing dogs that were originally from Czech lands. These dogs proved to have a strong influence on coarse-haired pointers in the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their offspring would later become a resource for re-generation of the Český Fousek. 1912 brought a new club for wirehaired pointers. This club paid 400 crowns for a female named Freya that had just won first prize at an exhibition at Písek. Freya was bred to a “decorated” dog from St. Hypolite, and she had 7 puppies, of which one died. The remainder of the puppies were given to club members and were entered into a strictly controlled breeding program.

World War I was devastating for many sporting breeds and the Český Fousek was no exception, but a few enthusiasts were able to keep some excellent dogs. Breed registra-

tions were discontinued during this time, and unfortunately, dogs that were not officially registered had difficulty entering breeding programs after the war was over. Freya had a sad ending in the course of a rabies epidemic during WW I, likely in 1916. She was taken and was destroyed before her owner, Ferdinand Sekyrka, could get to her. The laboratory report later came back as negative for rabies. In spite of the tragedy, she remained a "Primal Mother" of Český Fousek.

In 1918, the official Czech stud book was divided into a Czech part with the Czech parentage book (CPB) and a German part with the Deutsches Jaghund Stammbuch Hubertus (DJStH). Continuing through WWII with the Reich books (RZB) there was a blending of Czech and German dogs but under different breed names, depending on where they were registered. By 1923, with a new Sportsman' union, the ČSMU, a new registration was established for Czechoslovakian dogs the Člp. The Czechoslovak Republic became members of the newly formed World Canine Organization, the *Fédération Cynologique Internationale* (FCI).

František Houska and like-minded Český Fousek enthusiasts formed the Spolek Pro Ohaře Hrubosrsté- Český Fousek (Association for Coarse-haired Pointers- Český Fousek) in 1924. It was now the third breed club, because the ČSMU didn't keep up breed registry, particularly affecting Český Fousek. This left only a limited number of dogs allowed to be bred and registered. The new organization broke with the typical European model for breeding in that they instituted the new rules that individuals could only enter breeding if they were successful in both exterior exams, through dog shows, as well as working aptitude at trials. This was a seminal point in the history of the Český Fousek, and did mean slower expansion of the breeding pool.

Beginning in 1939, the hunting unions were challenged by increasing Nazi influence, especially along border areas. The hunting unions were in dynamic flux as well, but the breeding of good quality Český Fousek continued with František Houska dedicating his whole life to the breed. Complex post-war activities saw many changes in the various hunting unions. Complicated rules were set forth for registering a Český Fousek so that they would be registerable in the FCI. Many dogs were eliminated from breeding because of the breed name that was used during examinations and ability tests. Dr. Joseph Kuhn championed the breed in the FCI application, and finally an incredibly old dog breed was getting recognition as the Czech National Hunting breed. In May 1963 the FCI adopted the breed standard under number FCI 245. After recognition, breeding continued to be carefully controlled with the established lines under the Breeders of Český Fousek club (Klub Chovatelů Českých Fousků - KCHČF) within the Czech Moravian Kennel Union (ČMKU).

History of Český Fousek in North America

Our first records of Fousek in North America are under the German name "Stichelhaar". A German language newspaper, Nebraska Staats-Anzeiger, reported in the 31 August 1893 issue, a duck hunting story from the previous fall/winter (1892). According to the report, a Stichelhaar pulled another hunting dog out of a partially frozen slough that was too difficult for the hunters to enter. The story goes on to tell of how the owner of the Stichelhaar was at first angry the dog had disobeyed a command and then worried he would lose his dog. But the incident became a celebration where all turned out well and the Stichelhaar was praised.

A review of European and North American studbooks from 1900 through 1950 can trace a number of dogs registered as Stichelhaar in Europe that upon import into North America were registered in the AKC, FDSB, or CKC under the breed name of Wire-haired Pointing Griffons. Thus, continuing the influence of the Fousek on the Wire-haired Pointing Griffon breed in the North America.

The first know dog identified as a Český Fousek brought to North America was **Gero z**



**Gero (Gero z Hlubočinky)
with owner Dr. Milena Stoszek**

Hlubočinky. Prior to arrival in America, Gero was owned and trained by Dr. Milena Stoszek. He received prize I in all of his lower tests and was selected to enter the *Memoriál Karla Podhajského* in 1963, and from there selected among the ten best dogs to run in an International trial in Hluboka also in 1963 where the Czechoslovakian team won against the German team. By 1964 Dr. Stoszek and Gero had escaped from what was then communist Czechoslovakia. They eventually made their way to the USA.

The first North American Český Fousek Club, called the Fousek Club of North America, was soon born and began registering dogs. By the mid-1970s there were 30-40 Český Fousek in North America with most dogs in Canada. Mr. Stanley Viezner's Swansea Kennel in Toronto Canada was one of the two leading breeder/importers during that time. He imported **Baron z Ochvaldu, Fanka z Vrbeckého hájku, and Ilka z Fešandy.** The other Canadian kennel that imported Český Fousek was Pine Ridge, owned by Mr. Michael Pallota. They imported **Argo Plato, Dona z Alblova dvora, Aida z Tiské**

hájenky, and Šik z Mokřan and bred three litters. However, Pine Ridge subsequently moved to breeding Pudelpointers. Dr. Stoszek's Palouse Prairie Kennel imported **Ferko z Beranovské stráně and Bela ze Zvikovské bašty.** Together these three kennels formed the core of their club. In the mid-1970s Ed and Joan Bailey attended a NAVHDA event in Spokane WA where Český Fousek were being tested. The Fousek Club of North America remained small with about 17 members, but produced a number of litters by the mid-1990s but by the late 1990s had disbanded. Incidentally, Scott Overton bred a litter of pups in Oregon and one of those dogs, **Angus of Chinquapin Ridge,** remains in the CFNA as a potential stud dog (frozen semen) that we hope will

add much needed genetic diversity when used. Angus is also one of the founding dogs for the Český Fousek New Zealand breeding program.

During the early 1980s the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America (WPGCA) concluded that the griffons that they were producing needed infusion of new blood. They turned to club member, Mr. Joseph Nadeker for help. Mr. Nadeker was Czech, and after correspondence with Czechs “back home” he recommended that the Český Fousek, one of the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon founding breeds under the German name of Stichelhaar, be used. An excellent and detailed account of this can be found in Joan Bailey’s book, *Gun Dog Supreme: The History and Story of How to Improve a Breed* (1996). The first Český Fousek imported by the WPGCA was **Erik od Jezárek**, followed closely by several other Czech dogs. Ms. Bailey took the lead in developing the breeding system in the USA. Mr. Warren Webster, Mr. John Lundberg, Mr. Joseph Nadeker, and Dr. Thomas Whitley were early WPGCA owners and/or breeders of im-

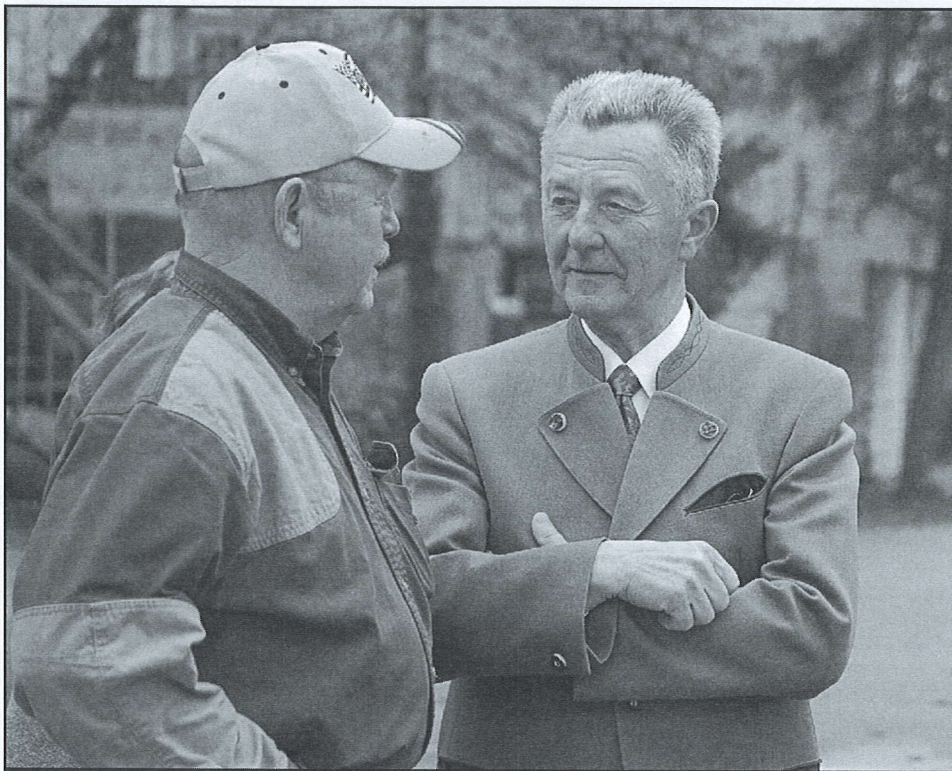


Erik od Jezárek was the first Český fousek imported to North America by the BWPGCA (then WPGCA). Erik was born 28 June 1981. In the Czech Republic he earned a Prize I in MFH (451) and Prize I MRK (477). He sired several excellent litters in North America and is represented in the pedigrees of about half of the puppies recently imported from the Czech Republic. Erik’s offspring were well known for their sweet temperaments. He lived to the ripe old age of 18 years 3 months.

ported Český Fousek. Within two generations what began as an infusion of Český Fousek into the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon had changed to the WPGCA breeding Český Fousek instead. The WPGCA members were happy with their dogs but persisted in calling them Griffons for the next 30 years even though pedigree analysis shows these dogs were predominantly Český Fousek.

Several more Czech Český Fousek were imported during early- to mid-1990s to help sustain the small breeding population including two males that were used extensively in breeding, **Dan Černíky** and **Chyt ze Záplav**, both owned by Mr. James Seibel. The Breeding Committee at that time consisted of Mr. Seibel and Mr. John Pitlo. They traveled twice to visit with Dr. Jaromír Dostál, the KCHČF breed advisor, cementing the US-Czech relationship. With the help of Dr. Dostál, a number of Czech dogs were selected for importation of frozen semen to support the US population. In 2005 Mr. John Pitlo imported **Ayla of Ancient Kennel**, a brown female, from Mr. Armando Carlos of Ontario, Canada. Ayla produced three litters, two of which continue to have an influence on the population of the current CFNA club dogs.

By 2013 the breeding pool had dropped significantly, even with support of imported frozen semen from the Czech Republic. Two club members, Mr. Hiram Adelman and Dr. Rick Sojda from Montana decided to import a female puppy, **Cira od Aliny z Neh-**



Dr. Jaromír Dostál discusses the Cesky Fousek with Breeding Committee member, **John Pitlo** (Judges Seminar: Heartland Spring Test 2008)

(Photo by Rem DeJong)

vízd, and a male puppy **Edý z Veseckých luhů**. Subsequently, 2014 saw the beginning of a wave of imported puppies to reestablish the genetic diversity in North America with over 50 imported by 2019, including two from The Netherlands. Soon after this wave of imports began it was recognized that there should finally be a club name change to reflect the dogs that were actually being bred. In 2015 the name Bohemian Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America (BWP/GCA) was established. (Bohemian Wirehaired Pointing Griffon is specified by the FCI as the English name for Český Fousek.)

The KCHČF remained very involved with the development of their Czech National Hunting breed in North America. Dr. Dostál made several visits to the USA to watch tests, and help train club members. 2014 brought a new step in interaction with the KCHČF through a delegation from the USA club representatives to the Czech Republic. This trip culminated in the signing of a formal agreement of cooperation between the two clubs. Later, in 2017, a delegation from the Czech Republic visited the Rocky Mountain chapter test and gave a series of presentations about the KCHČF and the Český Fousek.

The KCHČF inaugurated and hosted the First Český Fousek World Cup held in September 2018. The World Cup had dogs representing Czech Republic as well as Austria, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, and the USA. Only FCI registered dogs could enter, so that eliminated most of the BWP/GCA dogs because only those that had been imported Europe had FCI registrations. However, Dr. Andrew Ogden was able to bring a Czech import, Kája od Tyrše, as the North American representative where they successfully prized in the World Cup.

The fact that most of the North American dogs were not eligible to join in the World Cup, highlighted the importance of work that had been going-on for six years to have our dogs recognized apart from our small club group. To this end, the Club began to work during 2014 in conjunction with the KCHČF, to acquire FCI recognition for our North American bred dogs. During the Český Fousek World Cup in September 2018, members of the USA delegation and the KCHČF met with MVDr. Široký, president of the ČMKU. In May 2019 the FCI held an international meeting at the Shanghai China International Dog Show where the question of registration was brought up. In the fall of 2019 the North American club finally got word from Yves De Clercq, secretary of the FCI that registration should be through the Puerto Rico FCI kennel club, Federación Canófila de Puerto Rico (FCPR) by a special agreement between the FCI and FCPR to register dogs of breeds not recognized by the AKC. Since that time, registration of both individual dogs and litters have been through the FCPR.

In December 2019 club membership voted to change the club name from the Bohemian Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America to Český Fousek North America (CFNA). This was to reduce confusion between the Korthals Griffon and the Český Fousek breeds here in North America and further bring us into alignment with our parent club, the KCHČF. Therefore, the CFNA was established to finally recognize that switch in breeding that began in 1985 with the importation of Erik od Jezárek.