

COCHINS 1920

Picture source:
Avicultura 1921,
Voice-over &
translations:
Sigrid van Dort,
Feb 2023



PARTRIDGE COCHINS

These noble animals are breeding products of the late George W. Mitchell, an American breeder. These animals are drawn after nature. We were privileged to meet this breeder in January 1913, just a few days before his death, at the Boston Show, where he showed the most magnificent material in partridge Cochins in all classes. These birds resembled each other like drops of water.

illustrator envisioned how the chickens would look ideally.

A sketch of the time when the pictures of the chickens were taken. World War I had just ended and countries in Europe were recovering from it. Cochins available in Europe were therefore also of much lower quality compared to those in America and also England.



WHITE COCHIN HEN (NL)

1st and 2nd prize 1920

A beautifully shaped hen with full, deep type and utmost proportions. The head ornamentation is also excellent. The feathering is nicely loose, making the animal well-feathered from behind. The leg feathering is good and quite closed.



WHITE COCHIN COCK (NL)

1st prize, 1921.

This still young cock has a very good, low, deep type and excellent, full, loose feathering. The bird is well filled out at the thighs and has excellent foot feathering; the head ornaments are also very good.

Two years before 1920, the Spanish flu broke out and also became a pandemic right away. In 1919, things were also rumbling in Europe, Estonia and Latvia fought for independence, Theodore Roosevelt was buried, a civil war rages in Russia and the Russians also start fighting with Poland, women's movements can be heard everywhere, Formally in June 1919, WW1 ended with the Treaty of Versailles, the 8-hour working day

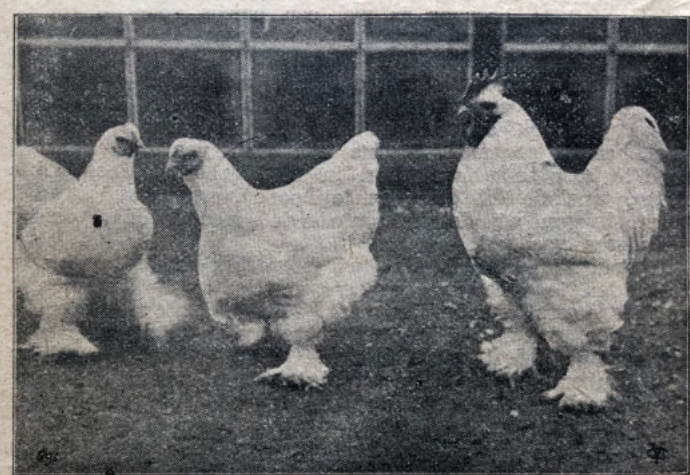
and Sunday off are instituted in the Netherlands and much more. However, the regulated work week gives more free time in the Netherlands. More time for playing with chickens later in time.

Even though it had been 75 years since the Shanghae came to the West from China and split into Brahmas and Cochins by the breeders, still 'original' Shanghae were born. These are called 'throw-backs' < in time. Especially in the absence of 'type-bred' Cochins from America and England, the Cochins seemed to go back to this original, more stocky type. This is also observed in the Netherlands, such animals stood higher on the legs compared to the more excessive 'Western flavoured' Cochins.

Western breeders of Asian chickens are always changing the originals chickens if they don't meet their taste. In this case, 'taste' is precisely the taste of the gentlemen with the loudest voices within the club, often also those with the most money and time or who were heard in the periodicals that narrated about chickens. Think of the Hen Fever... The exception here was the Croad Langshan, which to this day has kept the original type as it once came off the ship.

It was felt in 1920/21 that breeders in Asia had breed standards that did not match western tastes, especially regarding the Cochins/Brahmas or Shanghae. It does not seem to me that these Shanghae had a breed standard in China, the contrary of this thought has yet to be proven. Nothing is fixed in China, unless heritage, however there has always been room for development as time flows. After all, these large Asian chickens were bought at a local market in Shanghai and were meat chickens for the ship's crew for the journey. The chickens that survived the voyage because they were too scruffy & poor for the kitchen became the 'giant chickens'. Only then, when recognised as something Special, were they collected from China a few more times.

In short, whatever Asian chicken breed came with the ships and type they had, it was thoroughly cultivated in the West



A TRIO FINE WHITE COCHINS (NL) - 1st prize Febr. 1921.
In the above picture, the hen in the middle and the cock on the right of the picture, in particular, are outstanding animals. Beautiful full, deep animals with very typical Cochin appearance. The hen is wonderfully large; the cock, on the other hand, could be slightly heavier. Both animals won first prize at several exhibitions.

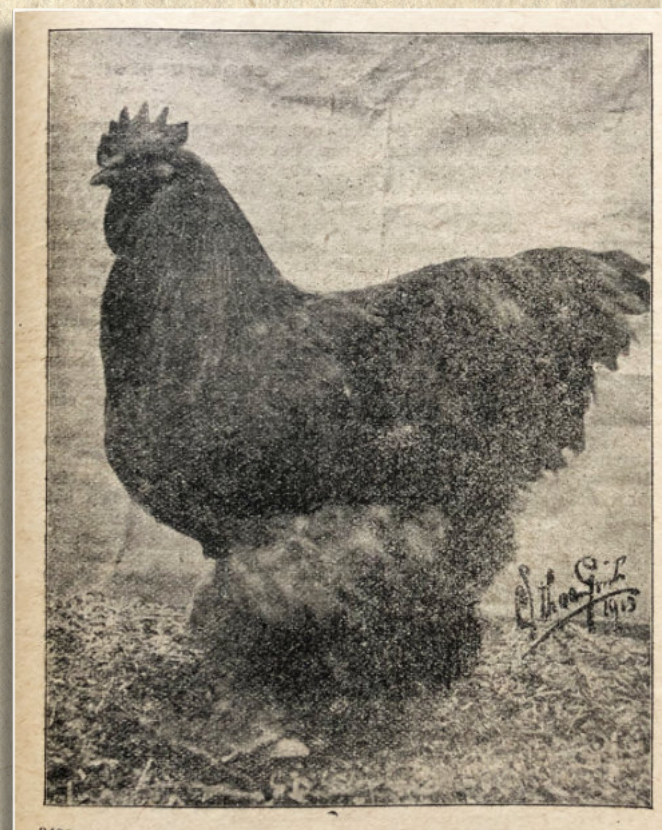


PARTRIDGE COCHIN COCK (NL) - 1st prize Febr. 1921.
A very strongly built cockerel, but whose entire appearance does not come into its own because the feathering is too firm and the animal is therefore not sufficiently filled out from behind. In addition, the hocks are too strongly developed and consist of stiff feathers. The head ornaments are good and the animal lacks only full, loose feathering to be fine.



PARTRIDGE COCHIN HEN (NL) - 1st pr. Feb. 1921
A beautiful, large and thereby deeply built hen, which at most could have been set a little deeper in front to come closer to the ideal type. Unfortunately, the photo does not show anything of the partridge markings.

(again with exceptions if they met the taste on arrival) and thus the differences between the Brahmas (with the help of already present Malays) and the Cochins emerged. The latter were seen as 'clouds of feathers' as the ideal drawings show whereas that was really not the case in the beginning if you look at the drawings (Harrison Weir) from that time. The heads also changed,



ENGLISH BUFF COCHIN COCK
1st prize Crystal Palace Show.
This cock shows brilliant, deep type and a fine, even buff colour, which even in the photograph shows to its full advantage. The head is very fine.

the heavy heads with eyebrows of the Malays were put on the Brahmas and the round heads of the Shanghae remained on the Cochins. Some breeders have 'always' stressed on not fixing phenotypical breed characteristics as this would be at the expense of laying ability. Something like this did come true, the laying ability of the original Shanghae was described as more than adequate, they were used in many utility breeds. It was believed in 1920 that by emphasising appearance, this led to the detriment of laying ability in the Brahmas and Cochins. Felch (USA) and Cook (UK) fought to maintain the utility characteristics.

It was Felch in America who ensured that the Brahmas there were well regarded both for eggs and meat (lights) for a long time. Speaking of today, debates are going on. Industrial chickens don't have much competition of the standard breeds. After WW1, breeders had to search for typical Brahmas and Cochins as there were not many of them left on the European continent. They took up 'reconstruction' in 1919. So that at the shows in that year, some fine Brahmas and Cochins could be seen. It was mainly animals from America and England that gave the Cochins a flight to the front at the time to make up for lost breeding years. Later, all this had to be done again after WW2.



AMERICAN BUFF COCHIN COCK
1st prize New York and Boston 1917
This cock shows almost the peak of full feathering and exceeds even the standard in feather richness. Although such a highly exaggerated type for exhibition is not absolutely necessary to win, any Cochin breeder can immediately see the great value of such an animal for breeding, because it possesses to an exaggerated degree all the requirements that are so difficult to achieve.

ADULT COCHIN HEN (drawing Van Gink)
(Seen from behind and from the front)
It is a prerequisite that Cochins are beautifully broad, especially on the thighs, which should be richly feathered. The feathers of the vulture hocks should be soft and loosely feathered and will then stand inward and beautifully fill out the hindquarters.

