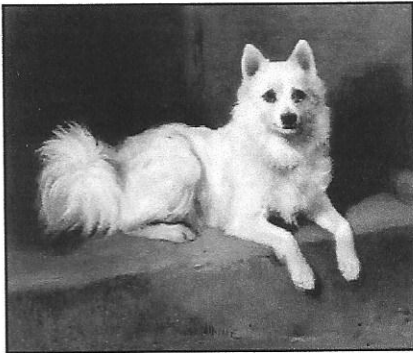


ian England was the Fox Dog.

Pomeranian remained fashionable through Georgian Times and Shaw and Walsh mention that in the mid 18th century imports arrived from Germany, France, Belgium and other parts of the Continent.

How did the Spitz reach American Shores?



Dog dealers imported the breed to America. It is often thought immigrants may have brought Spitz with them but this is unlikely as most immigrants of this era were extremely poor, with few resources.

The May 1876 article noted the Spitz was rarely seen twenty years before but 'has become so common as to be nearly valueless in the dog market'. On November 17th 1876 another report condemning the breed confirms they were once fashionable and imported 'he did not voluntarily immigrate'. That article went as far as to suggest punishment for any who continued to import the breed plus the slaughter of all those already in the country. In January 1877 a duty imposed on Skye Terriers was scoffed at in the press as ridiculous in a country 'in which the loathsome Spitz is permitted to reside'.

At the height of his popularity the fashionable Spitz was a status dog 'no carriage was held to be complete which was not furnished with a Spitz Dog, snarling on the front seat'. The embellishment of 'snarling' is of course another poke at his character but also illustrates his actual true role as a dog!

Spitz were utilised as Watch Dogs...

Contrary to most modern viewpoints, that they were sledge dogs or shepherd dogs, they were typically utilised as watch-dogs in Europe and were delegated watching tasks according to size. In Europe they were popular and numerous looking after farmyards, vineyards, barges, the cart's full of wares of merchants and in their smaller sizes the domestic property of people. Known for devoted and unswerving loyalty to their master they were quick to bark while sensibly staying out of reach of strangers - hence the back-biting claims made by the journalist. As Herr Albert Kull, a breed expert, later wrote 'he is no vagabond, no lickspittle; he knows what his place is, and what his duties are ... he has to watch house and homestead, and to follow only his master'.

Most canine historians noted their ability to 'watch' and Shaw wrote 'as a guard to a house, however, if kept indoors, the Pomeranian is of some service, for his ears are keen, and an inclination to bark seems deeply rooted in the variety'.

As the breed became less fashionable, perhaps owing to the latest craze for Fox Terriers and Collies (noted by Walsh) they became more affordable. It is unlikely the poorest and working class of New York kept a dog as life in the overcrowded tenements was hard enough without the expense of a dog. The rising middle and merchant class were probably the new market for dog ownership. It undoubtedly appealed to those with German ancestry.

By 1876 the Spitz was fairly common - one year later, following the introduction of a Dog License they were second only to the Black and Tan Terrier with 1603 being accounted for. Interestingly 7 were recorded as Pomeranians!



FIG. 34.—A SPITZ DOG.

THE POMERANIAN OR SPITZ DOG.

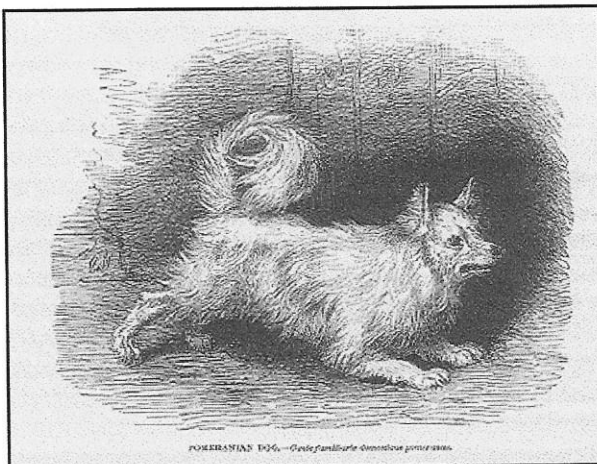


'A Whited Canine Sepulchre'

The crux of 'A Whited Canine Sepulchre' was the breed had caused 75% of the deaths in the City from Hydrophobia. This was the name of the disease used to describe a human exhibiting the disease of rabies. Among other symptoms, the victims typically had a dread of water and were unable to swallow - hence the phobia of water. There is no particular evidence in the press that the Spitz was guilty of this charge but the breed had been named as the cause of the recent death of a young girl. A couple of years before a popular doggy person called Francis Butler had allegedly died of the disease. This gentleman had written books both fictional and factual about dogs and was caring for a sick Spitz when he was bitten. He died six weeks later.

Rabies was not a common disease at the time. However, the probability of death if bitten by a rabid dog was apparently 1 in 15 (NYT July 7th 1874). Annual deaths in New York from hydrophobia were estimated to be 3 2/3 per annum. The population, although increasing with almost every arriving steamer, was roughly 1.5 million. In France the instance was 2 1/2 cases per annum. In the UK between 1869 & 1888 the mortality rate was 1.59 cases per million.

This was an era when almost 6,000 people died of diarrhoeal complaints annually. In the damp and mouldy tenements of New York an average of 9,000 children a year died. It therefore seems remarkable that an increase of hydrophobia victims from 3 2/3 cases to 5 or 6 deaths per annum would have such a dramatic impact!



Additionally the medical profession had begun to doubt whether all the victims were in fact genuine cases. This was still a time when the disease was not fully understood and it would not be until 1885 a breakthrough came due to the efforts of Louis Pasteur and Emile Roux.

New York became "wild with fright"

In 1874 Doctors wondered why so few cases - 5 at the most - were sufficient for Brooklyn and New York to go 'wild with fright'. The medical profession were already talking of a condition known as pseudo-hydrophobia or hysterical derangement where the victim lived in such terror of getting the disease they died of convulsions from fright. Francis Butler was apparently suspected of this condition along with one other doubtful case.

Apparently dogs had only to wink an eye or to be chased by street boys to be declared mad, leading to policemen clubbing dogs to death. Increasingly people died of pseudo-hydrophobia and deaths attributed to the disease were often found to actually be the result of intemperance, convulsions tetanic (a result of tetanus), meningitis, and so forth. Bizarre remedies were sought one man claimed to have cured his son of rabies with a 'mad-stone' now valued at \$50. A doctor at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York cured a teenager, who erroneously believed he had hydrophobia, by tying him to the bed and spanking him with a wooden splint normally used for broken limbs. An elderly doctor declared 'it is a wonder we live at all, we are so afraid of everything'.

In November 1876, following the deaths of two German men living in a shanty on 68th St from hydrophobia, blamed on their Spitz dogs, an article titled 'A venomous beast' appeared in the New York Times. The charge this time was almost laughable naming the four most venomous beasts in the United States as 'the