

Homepage

History and Development Biographies

British Show Info to 1915 Colours History

History FAQ

Written by Vivienne Peterson and prepared by Vycki Brock Copyright February 2010

This information also appears on general Pom site - www.pomkins.com

Why do we call the breed a Pomeranian?

The name Pomeranian came into general use by the 1760s in England but at the time was a general term and included breeds now separately classified – all 5 sizes of German Spitz (inc. the Keeshond) plus the Italian Volpino. In Germany one of many regional names for the Wolfshund (Wolf dog) or Spitz dog was 'Der Pommer' – signifying the type found in Pomerania (NE Germany). This name was anglicised to Pomeranian.

Other old regional names for Spitz dogs in Germany translate into English as the Bear Spitz, the Lion Spitz, the Wolf Spitz and the Great (Gross) Spitz. Smaller Spitz also existed such as the Fox Spitz and later the Mannheimer Zwerg-Spitz.

This type was also called - in France the Lou Lou, Chien de Pomeranie or Lulu - in Holland the Wolfshond before the name was changed in 1780s to Keeshond - in Italy the Volpino, Lupino, Cane de Quirinale, Florentine Spitz and Italian Spitz.

However, it was the name Pomeranian that captured the imagination of Georgian England and the rest is history!

It's worth mentioning the Germans did not officially use the definition <u>Pomeranian</u> until 1974! As of 1994 the FCI Standard defined the Pomeranian/Zwergspitz as the smallest size of German Spitz (Deutscher Spitz). Zwerg means dwarf. In Holland all 5 sizes (of German Spitz) are known as Keeshond a modern Pom is a dwerg Keeshond.

What was the first known reference in British literature to a Pomeranian dog?

James Boswell and Pomer a Pomeranian dog - Mainz and Mannheim November 2nd 1764 First known reference in British literature to a Pomeranian dog.

Boswell on the Grand Tour of Germany and Switzerland Edited by Frederick a. Pottle, Yale Edition, published by McGraw Hill Book Co. Inc. 1953 extract scanned from my own personal collection of Boswell's diaries.

I was delighted to debut this fresh information about Poms in an article about Pom History I wrote in July 2008 commissioned by the American Pomeranian Club's 'Pomeranian Review' and published March 2009 in the 50th Anniversary Edition of the Pomeranian Review. It is equally gratifying to learn this information along with documentation about the intentional breeding of a Pom female with a semi-tamed Wolf in London in 1765 has now entered main stream Pom information and has recently been cited on Wikipedia!

Mainz, 1 November 1764

165

tience was again my kind comforter. Barnard and I went and viewed the town. It contains some very good houses, and it has a certain air very becoming in an ecclesiastical town. It was All Saints' Day. We went into two churches, which were both grand. My soul was elevated to devotion by the solemn vespers. Barnard and I supped at my inn. We had with us a French traveller. We were hearty.

Bertollon, a merchant of fine stuffs at Lyons. He and I and my servant and a German woman got into an extra post for Mannheim. The Frenchman had a Pomeranian dog called Pomer whom he was mighty fond of. He was a singular Frenchman, a great lubberly dog with a head like a British tar. He sung most outrageously. He was jolly. The German Frow was oldish and very fat. When he sung, she was like to choke with laughing, and when she recovered her breath cried, "Er is ein lustiger Mensch." I do not remember to have met with a more ludicrous scene, for the Frenchman and the Frow mutually laughed at each other. I was highly diverted, though my headache still continued. It was a heavy cold. I was in a real fever. I was just transported like a sack.

What is the origin or early history of the breed?

The FCI and German breed historians attribute the origin of the German Spitz (including the Pomeranian and Keeshond) to 'stone age Peat Dogs (Torfhund) – Canis familiaris palustris Ruthimeyer – and the later Lake Dweller's Pfahlbau Spitz'. The FCI and German historians consider the German Spitz to be the oldest breed of dog in Central Europe from which other breeds have been produced. This theory is substantiated by archaeological discoveries in Switzerland and throughout Germany. The German Spitz is considered to be the national breed of Germany.