

1898 Kai Tai – A very early smooth chow in Philadelphia - W.R. Furness owner



1898 "Kai Tai" Smooth – America

As in so many of my finds, this exciting little article depicting a smooth chow being strolled about in Philadelphia's Washington Square, led me down another very interesting path!

- The first thing that stood out is the early date of this "smooth" Kai Tai being mentioned in the article. So far this is the earliest record I can recall in my archives so far of a smooth coated chow in America
- Kai Tai was brought from China directly to America by Mr. W.R. Furness (Walter Rogers son of the famous H H Furness) . The few smooths that made it to America in these early years were mostly imported from English breeding stock
- The next thing I did was to research Mr. W.R. Furness. He and his wife were on the board of directors of the [Philadelphia Zoological Gardens](#) (the OLDEST ZOO in America) and donated many rare and exotic animals to the collection. This would explain how they came to bring home the handsome Kai Tai for their own house pet. W.R. Furness seemed from my findings to be an avid dog lover and collector of exotic breeds.
- The Zoo was enclosed by a stone fence, and the Victorian stone facade columns and wrought-iron gateway, designed by local architect Frank Furness , which still stand today. Frank Furness was one of Philadelphia's most well known architects of the day.



RESIDING in the vicinity of Washington Square a half a dozen or more dogs sustain the traditions of that part of the city by the purity of their blood and the exclusiveness of their daily life.

They are the canine aristocrats of that quarter of the city, and at favorable hours you can meet them on the square taking their daily airing. Do not presume on the

favors. Then there is the prize-winner, the English Boston bull terrier Chub, who has been shown at the Crystal Palace in London and in a bench show in San Francisco, who has an arsenal of ribbons and medals and carries his contempt for all animate nature so far as to refuse the bland overtures of Kai Tai (English, Black Devil), who came from China and is perhaps the only smooth-coated Chow in this country that has a black tongue.

The larger smooth-coated dog, who stands alert, is Kai Tai, the property of W. R. Furness. You will observe that he looks like an Australian Dingo in pose and in the shape of his body, but he has nothing else in common with that breed of villains. He is very exclusive, and as the household in which he dwells is also the residence of a number of canine pets, among them Priscilla, a pure Maltese, and a small Boston terrier bitch of fine strain, not to speak of other four-legged Vere de Veres, who are always laughing and playing, his sedateness and reserve are very marked by contrast. He has no intimacies, except with his master, who brought him from China two years ago, when he was a pup turning his first year. He is a true smooth-coated Chow, the edible dog of Chinese epicureans. Perhaps he feels his duty of gratitude to his master for saving him from the pot, and precludes his giving any attention to any one else. At any rate, he will follow no one but him, and though he deigns to treat his mistress with polished but cold courtesy, it as much as he will do. The peculiarity of his black tongue I have already mentioned. He is altogether well behaved and accepts life with the calm fatalism that is fitting to one born among the disciples of Confucius.

1883-1899

- **1883** First year a chow was entered at the Westminster KC (westminster history...who was this?)
- **1890** TAKYA was the first Chow Chow exhibited in America, by a Miss A. C. Derby. Takya took third place at the Westminster Kennel Club show that year
- **1890** LAGER BEER was the first chow shown at the 4th annual Westminster KC in 1880
- **1896** Westminster KC (from NYT clipping) Mrs. J. L. Kernochan's Chinese dog "Chow Chow" 3rd place
- **1897** 2 Chows shown in San Francisco KC show. One named COLUMBUS 1st place. Shown again in 1898 1899 4 Chinese imported chows shown. Names SULTAN, CHOW, CARIT and GYP.

ABOVE: To put the rarity of this smooth chow into perspective you can see here the recorded history of the chows in America before 1900

And finally, I get obsessed until I can find a face to go with the names. To me it brings these people , and the relationship to the Chow to life



(The Jekyll Island Cottage Colony)- A fascinating read (click photo to learn about this prominent Philadelphia family)