

# RARE DOCUMENTATION-CHINESE IMPORT ATTEMPT



Above is an example of a similar type to the puppies that may have been imported in the article below.

This 1922 article is very rare documentation of an attempt to import numerous chow puppies from China. For me this is "local" history as Mr. Alexander was from the Tacoma Washington area as you will see his estate (scroll down)

Not all Chow history is a joy to research.... but as an archivist...history is history. These little snippets that I uncover now and then shed a lot of light on how difficult it must have been for the chows and breeders alike to import indigenous stock from China. This short article below I'm sure will surprise you, and gives greater appreciation for how easily we can acquire dogs today from anywhere in the world, with our biggest hurdles being quarantines and weather

embargos

It is reported that an order has been placed in China for 12 Chow Chows, and that these dogs will be brought to Tacoma at an early date, for H. F. Alexander, president of the Pacific Steamship Co., who has a beautiful country place at Gravelly Lake, near Tacoma.

This is the small snippet from an August 1922 article that started my search for more info



This photograph of H.F. Alexander was taken when he was 38 years old. Photo by Ferrand, 1917.

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## **Chow Chows**

### **Importing Chows**

A few months ago H. F. Alexander, President of the Pacific Steamship Company, decided that he wanted some Chow Chow dogs direct from China for his country estate on Gravelly Lake, ten miles from Tacoma, Washington. The Oriental agents for his steamship line were instructed to purchase a lot of likely looking puppies and ship them to Tacoma in care of the officers of one of the big liners which ply between Tacoma and the Orient. Fourteen Chow puppies were delivered to the steamer, but despite all efforts of the ship's doctor, the officers, and the crew, only two puppies were alive when the steamer docked at Tacoma. These puppies died three days later. Mr. Alexander had an autopsy performed on one of the puppies in an endeavor to ascertain what caused the intestinal stoppage, all the puppies being affected in practically the same way. What looked like a small piece of bamboo was found.



The H.F Alexander Docked in Seattle. A ship similar to the ones the chow puppies traveled in

An investigation was made by his agents in China, and the summarized reports read something like this: Chinese breeders of Chow Chow dogs do not want these dogs exported. They are willing to sell dogs to local residents regardless of nationality, but object to the sale if a buyer makes known his intention to export the dogs. When Mr. Alexander's order for Chow puppies was received in China by the steamship company agent, he sent Chinese couriers out to buy the dogs. The influence of the local agent was strong enough to secure the dogs, but note how he was checkmated. A tiny piece of bamboo was bent double and tied with a small piece of skin or cat gut. One of these was fed to each puppy. The action of the stomach juices released the string, the bamboo spread open; stoppage of

the bowels or intestines resulted and the dog died. Mr. Alexander is bound to have a kennel of imported Chow Chows. His next move will be to secure young stock from or through permanent white residents of Chinese cities, instead of from Chinese breeders direct.

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The Alexander country estate, "Inglewood", in Lakewood. This estate later became a public garden. Courtesy of the Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room.



The Alexander house in Tacoma.  
Washington State Historical Society Collections.

I WOULD LIKE TO END THIS ARTICLE ON A BIT MORE POSITIVE NOTE....

The video below highlights, the now public garden, which is the former estate where HF Alexander must have imagined his chows roaming and playing.. This is a fascinating piece of "local" Pacific Northwest history I will continue to research as well as visit this garden in honor of those precious puppies lost .

As I mentioned earlier, this is the history of our breed and is important for an archive to document everything. The article above is very rare documentation that would eventually be faded in history