



Dominique History

Taken from the 'Dominique News', December 1987. Written in 1945 by Mr. Ed Uber, distinguished Dominique breeder.

The "American Dominique" is the oldest American breed of fowl. Therefore we fellow Americans can take great pride in specifying, "American Dominique" when referring to this grand breed.

The French name of "Dominique" was derived from birds which were supposedly to have been imported from the Island of San Domingo. They were later crossed with other fowl of various origins, forming what today is known as our, "American Dominique".

In the early Colonial days, according to tradition, the settlers formed this breed by a mixture of Dorking, Asiatic, and Hamburg blood. Many strains of this great breed were scattered throughout the original thirteen colonies, as the eggs were carried from one settlement to another by the early fur traders and sailors.

At that time these birds had no modern hen house. The hens roosted at night on poles in old sheds, spent most of the day scratching on barn floors, and ran around in all kind of weather. Under these conditions, it was impossible for a weak or poorly developed bird to withstand the cold and storm; therefore, only the very hardy and vigorous survived.

These birds had no type, and were marked like Joseph's coat of many colors – some were speckled black and white; others had red and white in their plumage, which could be expected of a fowl of mixed origin. Some of these had five toes denoting Dorking ancestry, and others bore the Hamburg carriage and shape. Most of the original females were wonderful layers, considering the conditions under which these fowls existed. Their eggs were light brown. They made good mothers, which was very essential in those days, as there were no modern incubators.

When our standard makers handed out the decree that the plumage should be sharply barred, many breeders crossed the original bird with the Barred Rock. This changed the form, eliminating the heavy tail plumage which was characteristic of the old original Dominique, but it did, however, improve the color. After the cross was made, this breed began to lose its popularity.