



## History of Dominique Chickens

The American Dominique is recovering from near extinction, thanks to a group of dedicated breeders who are serious in the quest of preserving and promoting this hardy, beautiful bird. The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) includes the Dominique on their Conservation Priority List in the 'watch' category and the Society for the Preservation of Poultry Antiquities (SPPA) includes the Dominique on their Critical List as being 'Old and Rare'. The ALBC 'watch' category means there are "Fewer than 5,000 breeding birds in the United States, with ten or fewer primary breeding flocks, and the breed is globally endangered."

Dominiques were well known in the United States prior to 1750, providing eggs, meat and chicks while foraging for their food in the farm yards of the newly settled colonies. By the 1850's the Dominique (or "Dominiker" as they were sometimes called) was the most popular chicken breed in the US, but that was soon to change. The importation of Asiatic breeds soon pushed the Dominique out of the farmyards as the new "fancy" breeds became more available. Used to develop the Barred Plymouth Rock, the confusion in appearance between the two contributed to the Dominiques disappearance from the show ring and by the 1950's some thought they may have become extinct.

Thanks to the foresight and determination of a few breeders, the Dominique breed survived and the Dominique Club of America was formed in the fall of 1973. Today the club has over 200 members and is steadily growing as more people discover the benefits of producing their own eggs, meat and chicks from these hardy, friendly, survivors.