

# ALIBI BILLY AND THE BLUE CAPS

Purl Skaggs

Many years ago Ike Carrel asked me to write something about Alibi Billy. He knew Billy had been at stud at my place, furthermore that I had hunted him several years. Recently other numerous requests from several states asked me to answer Volunteer's tirade against the Blue Caps. This will not be an attack on anyone's like or dislike of any breed of hounds. It is not aimed to smear nor am I calling anyone narrow minded.

I do not understand who was sniped at—Hiram Card, Dad Powel, Glenn Black or just any Blue Cap admirer. However, I'll prove some of his statements are misleading. I do not care just how many homes Lady Haven had, nor how many sons or grandsons Orien had placed in the field. I do not know just what Reno Cole said about the Blue Caps. I considered him an authority, an honest gentleman, sportsman and a real friend.

Volunteer quoted Mr. Cole as saying that P. A. Peterson thought even less of the Blue Caps than Mr. Cole did. I'll quote him three times. (1) Mr. Peterson and I were standing on a sand ridge at the Western trials when Muskeag Sportsman was running alone, as he had gotten away from his bracemate he came by us driving the rabbit alone. Mr. Peterson remarked: "I have been watching that hound for some time, he does his

work in true hound style and is a typical Blue Cap." (2) Later Mr. Peterson told me that the cross of Billy and Uncle Sam was the best nick he knew of, that it worked equally well either way they were crossed; adding Uncle Sam had so much fire and fight that his method was a little more consistent when worked hard, that the cross of Billy helped correct that in his get. His third statement comes later.

Why did Volunteer neglect mentioning some of Alibi Billy's best get whose dams were Blue Cap or mostly so since he emphasized, those of the Wheatleys? I personally know several: Sheik of Shady Shores (Billy and Patrimony, she by Uncle Sam x Elora Blue Speckle) was an outstanding field champion. I had the pleasure of giving him his championship. Many of Sheik's great grandsons and daughters still bear his name. I raised from puppyhood Alibi Warner and

Alibi Webb, littermates by Billy and Pache, she a sister to Patrimony. Both were good field hounds, Warner a bit better than Webb. They were practically the same breeding as Sheik. Still another: Blue Cap Ranger was sent me but I did not like his size and returned him.

I judged Rock City Ted and found him to be a high class field dog. I was studing Billy when he sired Stewart's Little Billy. I judged both Little Billy





1922 BUCKEYE TRIAL JUDGES  
From left — P. W. Metz, Charles Vogel, Purl Skaggs.

and his dam — both were inclined to be a little wide at their checks. Bennett's Gus at the Western was a sensation when I judged there. I judged Broncho Billy, another good field hound.

I raised Alibi Marie, Idaho, Sam's Emmy Lou, Warney P, Orphan Boy, Susan Red Wing but never considered Alibi Marie a good field hound as she was too close with her mouth. She was a very good hunter and very fast. (By Billy and a Wheatley bitch). Idaho (Billy x Elora Blue Speckle) would undoubtedly have been a field champion if she had had a chance. Sam's Emmy Lou (Uncle Sam and Emmy Lou, a full blooded Blue Cap) when running at the Western, the veteran judge, Charlie Underwood, told me she was one of the best young bitches he had seen in 10 years. I sent her littermate Emmy Lou II to Russel Long of Elmira, Ontario, Canada, some 28 years ago. Mr. Long developed his Blue Cap strain from her — he still advertises here.

Warney P and Orphan Boy were littermates (Billy and Elora Blue Speckle). I sent Warney P as a derby to Willett Randall. Later he sold him to a man in the south for a top price for hounds at that time. His littermate, Orphan Boy, was just as good as Warney P. I will take time here to say I was cursed in ten states for measuring beagles out of the 13 inch class, but 12 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches was the most I could ever measure Warney P. However,

at North Creek, New York, he was measured to be 13 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches, so he ran in the 15 inch derby and won in great style. If I remember right he went on to 2nd in all-age.

Tell me why James McAleer was so anxious to get Bennett's Gus to head his Tippecanoe Kennels when he already had three stud dogs? Why didn't Volunteer mention those hot little 13 inchers sired by Billy, owned by Mr. Spracklin of Canada? Sprack's Fuzzy, Tony, Ben Bolt II. He mistakenly tries to leave the impression that Mr. Powel would not inbreed Blue Cap bitches to Alibi Billy. That statement is not true. Susan's Red Wing by Billy out of Susan, a half-sister to Billy, was out of a full blooded Card Blue Cap.

Now comes the third statement of Mr. Peterson's. He had watched Red Wing run in first and second series at the Western, saw her fall over from sickness in the third series. He saw Van Burton (owner of Rock City Jane, her brace mate) pick her up, then Pete exclaimed: "That is one of the greatest 13 inch bitches I ever saw, if not the greatest." The two judges, John Brigham and Ed Binder, that night at the hotel said it was too bad Red Wing could not have stayed on her feet a few minutes longer to win 1st instead of 2nd. Also it was their opinion that she was the best hound at the Western that year. Mr. Burton said the only thing that kept Red Wing from defeating Jane was being unable to stay on her feet. Western beaglers regarded Jane as a really great field bitch.

Believe it or not, Mr. Volunteer, Red Wing was an inbred Blue Cap, sired by Billy, bred by Warren Powel. Red Wing, Warney P, Sam's Emmy Lou, Muskeag Vic and their sires and dams you failed to mention. In my opinion all were outstanding hounds but you only mention Fd. Ch. Derbyshire Little Forrester, then leave the impression he got his field ability from his dam, Glory — Reynal's bloodline.

Consider this: Edwin Hill of Kansas City, Kansas, owned a litter brother to Little Forrester and he was a high class field dog also. But understand that Glory, their dam, was not worth a thin dime. I hunted her many times and never heard her cry a rabbit. Their litter sister, Patricia, was bred twice to Alibi Punch, an Uncle Sam dog, and both matings were dismal failures. Now why that failure? Dad Powel told me the only reason he kept



**ALIBI BILLY - Whelped 4/5/13  
Imp. Driver x Elora Blue Diamond  
Combining Thorpe Satchville and  
Blue Cap in many pedigrees**

Glory was for her size of 12 inches in order to keep the size of Billy's pups down.

Another thing: Volunteer is entirely off the line, swinging too wide at checks in stating that Driver, Billy's sire, was one of the best. Driver, 13½ inches, was not a high class field dog—being very fast afoot for his size but entirely too stingy with his tongue and would not get down and dig them out when the going was hard. He had a good coat, flag tail, colored much like Billy but some better in type.

Billy's dam, Elora Blue Diamond, was a track straddler, heavy bawling mouth, black blanket, tan head, said to be 13 inches though she looked larger to me but I never measured her. Mr. Powel regretted selling Box, a full brother of Alibi Billy's to a Canadian and was anxious to get a dog by Box to cross on Billy bitches, which of course, would be inbreeding. There is no need deriding Mr. Powel's offer of ten dollars to owners of good bitches in breeding to Billy. What was wrong with that kind of business? I know beaglers and foxhound men today who offer free stud service to get good bitches to help establish their studs and they are not dumb Doras.

The Wheatleys, Summers, Oriens, Free-lands and Fd. Ch. Jupiter of Birch Brae were all good dogs and producers but Volunteer is so strong for the Thorpe Satchville blood-line that he might be somewhat enlightened if he would ask Dr. McElroy where he thought Jupiter got his field ability—from his sire, Little Dandy, or his dam, Juno of Thorpe Satchville blood?

Now I ask, what is the leading sire in beagledom today, by all established tests at trials and of the most field champions produced? Does he have a good sprinkling of Blue Cap blood? Isn't it a fact that there are more

field champions today with Blue Cap blood than any other one strain? Why do many successful field trial men still want Blue Cap blood?

You mention the winning packs at the National. What breeder of Blue Caps had the means or large enough packs to compete at those trials? You use the Wheatleys as comparisons. I have judged and placed many Wheatley hounds. P. M. Chidester, who bought them and continued under the Pen-croft prefix, had some good ones. Of all hounds of any breed that I ever saw, I think Wheatley Chorus was the most beautiful. I gave her five championship points on the bench and placed her in the field. She was about 14¼ inches, heavy muscled, good bone, glossy black blanket from head to tail, trimmed with rich mahogany tan—the same color as her head and ears, white running gear. She had a high pitched bawling mouth which seemed to have a sharp edge.

What does all this sum up to? Is one man right and the rest of the beagle world wrong? I am satisfied the Blue Caps were unharmed with recent comments—in fact it's the best and cheapest advertisement the Blue Caps ever had. The very tone of a poisonous article sounds like Pat's six foot boiler and 12 foot whistle. Every time Pat blew the whistle he had to stop to get up steam again. Now the warning whistle against Blue Caps was blown so hard it should take six months to get up enough steam for another blast. By that time maybe we can have something about Blue Dispatch or why Henry Prentice bred the Blue Cap bitch he got from Hiram Card to Alibi Billy if Blue Cap inbreeding was discouraged. Why Mr. Powel sacrificed one of Billy's sons, then paid an enormous price for a gland operation on Billy, with hopes of getting up to date Blue Caps from



**SUSAN'S RED WING  
A winner at the Western trials in 1919.**



the mating with the Prentice bitch. Why did the master of the Patches, Willett Randall, buy the Blue Cap bitch that won the 13 inch class at the Empire trials to infuse with his good family?

Alibi Billy, as I knew him, was not the size many people thought. I measured him many times—13 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches was very close to his height. Possessed with a very strong, heavy body, with enough bone for a foxhound, I doubt if there were enough hounds in one pack to make noise enough or run so wild to cause him to lose his head. I never heard Billy make a false note. He was a bit, too stingy with his tongue. His note was a high pitched bawl with a sharp edge. His strong head matched his body, he had good ears, square muzzle, definitely a line straddler; no day was too long, too hot nor too cold to cause Billy to leave the field. Inclined to be slow of foot he was by no means a potterer.

When the car was in the dog park, Billy had the habit of hiding on the running board, to slip out of the park so he might go hunt-

ing. He had almost a full black blanket, head and ears were pale tan in contrast to the rich tan head and ears of his dam, Elora Blue Diamond. With the grit of a bull dog he would fight any dog, regardless of size. I never saw him pick a fight but when another dog had a bone he wanted he would ease up beside the other dog and take hold of the bone. Then it was either the bone or a fight.

When Mr. Powel bought Redland Scott from Mr. Flammer, Scott was taken out of the crate and turned into the park with the other hounds. Billy was young at that time, but several bitches had been bred to him. So Billy seemed to think that Redland Scott did not belong there. Each hound measured the other for a short time, then Scott, a 14 $\frac{1}{4}$  incher, well developed hound made a pass at Billy. Mr. Powel said: "Just as well let them settle it so they will know who is boss." But after so long a time he had to twist Billy loose from Scott's throat as Scott was limp and all in, which may classify Billy as a pit fighter.

Billy got his hunting instinct from both sire and dam. Probably Diamond would have had a better chance of being placed at field trials than Driver, especially in tough going. I won't finish this without admitting Uncle Sam and other sires were an asset to Alibi Billy. Certainly Billy was as much or more of an asset to other bloodlines as they were to him. Neither do I claim Blue Caps the best strain of beagles living, but they have done their part toward the improvement of field trial beagles. May I make it plain too that I do not raise my voice against any particular bloodlines but I want beaglers to know some facts about Alibi Billy and Blue Caps in general.