

The Gay Hound Beginnings

The in-depth story of Frank Reese and his "Gay Strain Hunting Beagles" and an interview with Frank Reese by;
Rev John Parks

Frank Reese was born May 24, 1906, the oldest of nine children. He says that he "grew up on a poor farm in North Carolina." The Reese's were of German and Dutch descent, and they were Lutherans who, "went to church every Sunday unless extreme illness prevented it." The family took part in all the activities of the church. He states that he taught the adult class for 50 years, and he taught the last session in the church before a new, larger church building was built recently, and that the lesson which he taught that day was placed in the cornerstone of the new church, along with a book that he had written about tuberculosis.

After he taught in the public schools for eight years, Frank Reese's health broke and he was diagnosed as having tuberculosis in 1935. In the 25 years that followed, he spent a total of eight years in a sanitarium. However, he told me that, "after all the drugs, and major surgery in 1958, I have had good health, and now I work on the farm and run hounds regularly."

Before he had beagles, Frank Reese ran foxhounds. This was up until his health problems emerged in 1935. He told me that he judged his first foxhound field

trial in Georgia in 1929, and since then he has judged major field trials and bench shows all over the United States, including the national foxhound field trials.

When his health was poor, he sold dog food for the Rose Company in a five state area for 15 years. He was also a State Law Enforcement Officer for 20 years. At present he is secretary of the Alexander County Wildlife Club, which has a property valued at \$200,000. He says that he worked for years to set up this project and has held the office of secretary for several years. Frank Reese had held many other positions in community organizations such as the Ellendale Grange and the Alexander County Sunday School Association. In 1965, the University of North Carolina listed him in "Who's Who in North Carolina," and he has served on an Advisory Commission for Governor Jim Hunt. He has written many editorials for the Chase magazine of Lexington, Kentucky, and at present he is an occasional contributor of articles for Better Beagling magazine and "The Rabbit Hunter." Frank Reese also said that he "... organized the old Tar Heel AKC Beagle Club in 1946 and as secretary ran the first licensed AKC trials here at my kennel with an entry of 279, a record for a first licensed trial." After the Tar Heel (brace) Beagle Club "folded," he was one of four people to organize the present Tar Heel Small Pack Club, which is still running. He said that, even though he "... has not been very well pleased with some judges at times," that he had "... never discussed one of my entries with the judges before or after I ran."

I asked Frank when he got his first beagle and he said: "My family had beagles as early as 1910 which were a bench legged type mixed with farm dogs. We still had some of this type as late as 1930. I became interested in foxhounds in about 1918 and for a number of years did about all you could do with a foxhound at private hunts. ... It was hard to give up, but due to health, I went to beagles. It was a long hard road to come up with a good family (of beagles). I soon found out you had to breed them, and it was years before I found out you had to stay in the same family and breed to a family of good ones and not to the only good one in the family." When I pressed him on the question of when he got his first AKC registered beagle, he replied that he had bought his first registered beagle in 1938. She had already been registered as Gay Belle, so he adopted the prefix "Gay" for all his beagles after that and only used one other short name following it. He said that he had seen so many long names on foxhounds that he decided to keep his names short in the pedigree. Also, he felt that the AKC could use these names without a duplicate showing up.

I must confess that back in 1980, when I first saw the prefix "Gay" on a hound's name, I did a momentary "double take" and wondered just what kind of a beagle owner we had here. You see, the "gay rights" movement was in the national headlines about that time. Then, when I found out that the Gay hounds had been around for decades and there was nothing perverse about their originator at all, I

felt a little ashamed of myself. (Frank told me that had the name meant in 1938 what it does today, he would never have used it.) Back to Gay Belle now, Frank Reese said that she was about 12 inches tall and had good conformation, except she was a "... bit foxy in the muzzle" (as was another of his early foundation bitches named Gay Rose). He went on to say that ". . . after 12 generations it still gives me trouble." Frank noted in a letter that Gay Belle was "... a bit tight with her mouth but (was) dead game and when run all day up front with our young Walker foxhounds." Here is Gay Belle's pedigree:

Ch. Shady Shores Squaller

Rocco Toney
Lasco Betty

Koontz's Major

Fd. Ch. Carolina Shorty

Amawalk Jennie
Amawalk Tuck

Gay Belle

Vernon Somerset Flagrant
Amawalk Kid
Amawalk Flirt

Koontz's Ruby

King Cotton Charm
King Cotton Mary
King Cotton Nanny

The next 16 hounds in the fourth generation (from top to bottom) of Belle's pedigree are — Fd. Ch. Shady Shores Select, Tick Ridge Mary, Dual Ch. Seibold's Panel, Stackers Lady, Montgomery Cy, Katy Mae Midget, Fd. Ch. Shady Shores Select. Fd. Ch. H L Flip, Trobridge Major. V. S. Fair-maid, Fd. Ch. Amawalk Nip, King Cotton Maggie. Fd. Ch. Bohemia Dix. Sam's Carolina Bell, Fd. Ch. Bohemia Dix, and Grumbines Roxle.

Frank Reese bred Gay Belle to a male named Koontz's Frank:

Wing Ridge Lucas
Wing Ridge Ebony
Wing Ridge Charity

Fd. Ch. Burrfield Frank

Burrfield Riley
Burrfield Toppie
Burrfield Duck

Koontz's Frank

Ch. Pencraft Panel
Dual Ch. Seibold's Panel
Dual Ch. Seibold's Beauty
Amawalk Mimic
Fd. Ch. Amawalk Nip
Amawalk Flint
King Cotton Maggi

The next 16 hounds in the fourth generation of Koontz's Frank's pedigree (from top to bottom) are — Balaboo Sultan, Wing Ridge Beauty, White Oak Traveler, Klswaukee Mary II, Belray Governor, Klswaukee Sam, Samson Vestal Paleface, Ch. W. P. Trueboy, Dual Ch. Wheatley Costley, Clearview Sapper, Debonair Binder, Fd. Ch. Shady Shores Select, Fd. Ch. H. L. Flip, Fd. Ch. Bohemia Dix, and Sam's Carolina Bell.

As you can see, Frank had several ancestors in common with Gay Belle; however they were not close up, so it was only a very mild form of line breeding. Frank said that Amawalk Mimic, the dam of Koontz's Frank was "... a bit loose with her mouth," so perhaps he felt that this would counteract the tightness in Belle's mouth. At any rate, he said that Belle produced ". . . some tight and some babblers," which confirms what I have said in the past, that it is very difficult to cross extremes and get a "happy medium."

Gay Belle II was bred to a show hound named Ch. Bunny Run Ivan and a bitch named Gay Bunny resulted from this cross. Frank said that, "Ike Carrel did well on Bunny Run Ivan and I liked what he got is the reason I used him. He carried Ch. Cray's Tony blood and many times I bred to a stud because he carried Tony blood." Frank indicated that Gay Bunny was below average by his standards. He said that you just have to work with the hounds that you have, also that she had good bloodlines, so he bred Bunny to another show hound called Ch. C. S. Robbin and this cross produced a bitch named Gay Belle VI. He said that Gay Belle VI was a very good hound, and that he was encouraged after he made this cross and it produced Belle VI. Frank said that, "Gay Belle VI was the greatest running hound in a pack or Brace of any hound of the many all day and all night races we ran." He said as far as he is concerned she was the best hound in North Carolina in her day. He said that, "Jim Exum saw her run and begged me to breed her to Contentnea Jack II and give him a pup. I did but he (Jack) was old and she did not catch." Let's take a look at her pedigree:

Ch. Charmac Gay Boy
Ch. C. S. Robbin
C S Rosalie

Gay Belle VI

Ch. Bunny Run Ivan

Gay Bunny

Gay Belle II

There's a lot of show blood here, isn't there? I asked Frank about that and he said: "The hardest traits to put in a hound are type and gameness. I can put gameness in, but have never been satisfied with my progress in type, In spite of my use of a number of bench champions over the years. My best out crosses have been Charmac Gay Boy and Bedlam Basil. The show hounds gave me type and brains, less trouble on off game, and less babblers." You can see that cross of Ch. Charmac Gay Boy up there on the top in Gay Belle VTs pedigree, can't you? Well, what do you suppose Frank did next? Why he bred Belle VI to another son of Ch. Charmac Gay Boy. His name was Patten Hill Trigger. Frank said that, "Patten Hill Trigger won the largest bench show ever put on in North Carolina with J. W. Kidd Judging. He was not shown but should have been a Bench Champion. Trigger was not overly game but was almost perfect on the line, true as they came, a beautiful clear tongue. His breeder Harold Mullen wrote me that his litter brother Ch. Patten Hill Teacher was the best gun dog he ever shot over." Frank also told me that Trigger had a very true mouth, and he put it in his offspring too. It sounds like Frank was still fighting to get the correct use of mouth in his hounds, and this time he just may have done it. This cross produced a bitch named Gay Roxey. Here is Roxey's pedigree:

Charmac Gay Lad

Ch. Charmac Gay Boy

Charmac Wise Girl

Patten Hill Trigger

Ch. Madow Lark Brevity

Ch. Tyoh Runeful

Ch. Mullen's Matchless

Gay Rozey

Ch. Charmac Gay Boy

Ch. C. S. Robbin

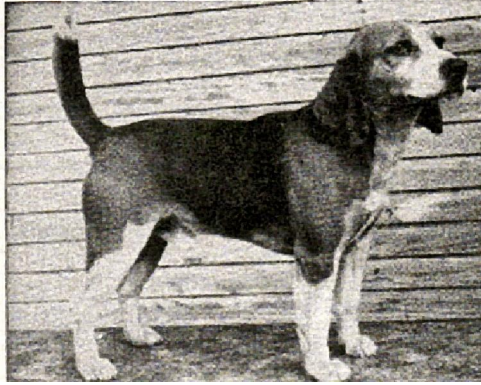
C 8 Rosalie

Gay Belle VI

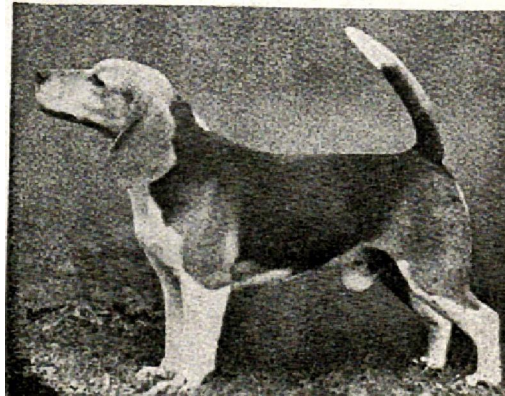
Ch. Bunny Run Ivan

Gay Bunny

Gay Belle II



Ch. Bunny Run Ivan



Ch. C. S. Robin

Evidently Gay Roxey was a fine bitch and Frank was reasonably satisfied that he was making progress after he bred her. Frank indicated that, "Roxie won a number of shows and could have finished if shown. She twice won best in show at the large Summer Carolina Show." At this juncture Frank's tuberculosis intervened and he went to the sanitarium. He said that it was so difficult to get started again that the next time this happened, he got someone to keep the best hounds for him until he was able to get back on his feet again.

After this first stint in the sanitarium, Frank was able to get Gay Roxey back and resume breeding her particular line. Since he had had plenty of time to think about it, he decided that it was time now to breed to some real "honest to goodness" rabbit hounds with a reputation for getting the job done. So, he chose a male called Fd. Ch. Drive XV. Here is his pedigree:

Fd. Ch. Gray's Captain
Fd. Ch. Rolcap Smokey
Fd. Ch. Scherer's Farmerette
Fd. Ch Smokey Wade
Pastime Pepstep
Spicey Wade
Cascine Slipper

Fd. CH. Drive XV

Fd. Ch. Contentnea Jack II

Fd. Ch. Grayline Venture

Gray's Darkness

Gingerbread

Grinstead Penny

Grinstead Tiny

Grinstead Nellie

Now this is more like it finally we have some hounds that I am familiar with! Both of the grandsires were fine rabbit hounds with the influence of Elmer Gray and Roland Scherer on them. Frank Reese didn't say a whole lot about the offspring of this cross; however it did result in one good bitch named Gay Mamie that later on would produce him (as FRANK put it) the greatest hound I ever saw run Mamie's pedigree:

Fd. Ch. Rolcap Smokey

Fd.Ch. Smokey Wade

Spicey Wade

Fd. Ch. Drive XV

Fd. Ch. Grayline Venture

Gingerbread

Grinstead Tiny

Gay Mamie

Ch. Charmac Gay Boy

Patten Hill Trigger

Ch. Tyoh Tuneful

Gay Roxey

Ch. C. S. Robbin

Gay Belle VI

Gay Bunny

Another early bitch of Franks was Gay Rose, she came from Dry Creek Kennels back in his early days but not as early as Gay Belle. Gay Rose was sired by Field Champion Dumbarton Dix and was out of Fd. Ch. Dry Creek Primrose. She like Belle was a bit tight mouthed, but also was (as Frank put it),,,,dead game and would run all day. With Gay Rose, Frank took a little different tact, he said she was a complete failure on Fd Ch. Pleasant Run Banker so he bred her to Fd Ch. Young's Ringer and got a bitch named Gay Echo. Frank said, "Echo was a good bitch, extremely close, but she was hurt by distemper." He said that the Young's Ringer X Gay Rose Cross was a good one, that two (of the offspring) placed In the Int. Futurity. A sister to Rose, Rose O Dix won it. Another sister is in the

Dingus MacRae pedigree. Also I bred to Young's Ringer partly to get the Ch. Croy's Tony In his dam." Echo's pedigree would look like this:

Fd. Ch. Rippling Run Ringer
Fd. Ch. Young's Ringer
Charmlon Lady June

Gay Echo

Fd. Ch. Dumbarton Dix
Gay Rose
Fd. Ch. Dry Creek Primrose

When it came time to breed Gay Echo, what stud do you suppose Frank Reese chose? Why our old friend Patten Hill Trigger of course! He had produced Gay Roxey for Frank, so he naturally thought it was a logical choice. Also, perhaps he was still looking for an infusion of that "true mouth" in Rose's line. The results of this mating are rather obscure to me. I really don't know much about it. However, one bitch was whelped that was named Glade Valley Fly. Regarding Glade Valley Fly, Frank said, "I sold Fly as a pup, and when I heard her run all night and until noon the next day, I paid a large price and a couple of good hounds for her. She had a fast clear tongue and I have to say was one of the 10 best bitches I ever saw run. Sheriff D. T. Bryan of Glade Valley registered Fly."



Fd. Ch. Rippling Run Ringer



Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Banker



Fd. Ch. contentea jack II

Meanwhile, Frank Reese tried breeding Gay Belle VI to a different stud than Patten Hill Trigger. He bred her to a male named Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Editor to produce a male named Gay Take. Here is what the pedigree looks like:



Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Editor was an Indiana hound and he had some fine blood behind him. You may be wondering where this is all going. Well, you are about to see another step in the big picture. Glade Valley Fly was bred to Gay Take to produce a male named Oxford Amber. Take a look at Amber's pedigree:

		Davis* Little Sport
	Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run'Editor	Patty of Davis Park
Gay Take		Ch. C. 8. Robbin
	Gay Bell VI	Gay Bunny
Oxford Abner		Ch. Charmac Gay Boy
	Patten Hill Trigger	Ch. Tyoh Tuneful
	Glade Valley Fly	Fd. Ch. Young's Ringer
	Gay Echo	Gay Rose

Here we see the blending of Reese's two original lines beginning with Gay Belle and Gay Rose. Also we see a blending of field hounds (on the top and bottom) with show hounds (through the middle).

Frank Reese says that Amber was a fine male. He thought very highly of him because of the two female lines which were his own and he especially respected the bottom line of Glade Valley Fly and Gay Echo. Frank said that Amber "... may have been the best male I ever saw run. You see him in a lot of pedigrees." An interesting little anecdote that Frank said about Amber that should be shared with you here, I think: "When Oxford Abner and his mates were six months old they broke out of the kennel and swam a river and put in with a pack a mile away and ran all day." Sounds like they had a lot of desire to hunt, doesn't it? Anyway, naturally Frank wanted to use Abner on some of his females. The cross that he decided on was one of Gay Mamie to Oxford Amber. He said, "When I came home from the sanitarium I borrowed Gay Mamie and bred her to Oxford Amber to get the Fly cross." In this cross we see Reese's lines beginning to concentrate and to come together. From this mating comes a bitch that Reese named Gay Slide. Let's refresh our memories as to the combination of hounds behind Slide:

Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Editor

Gay Take
Gay Belle VI

Oxford Abner

Patten Hill Trigger
Glade Valley Fly
Gay Echo

Gay Slide

Fd. Ch. Smokey Wade

Fd. Ch. Drive XV
Gingerbread

Gay Mamie

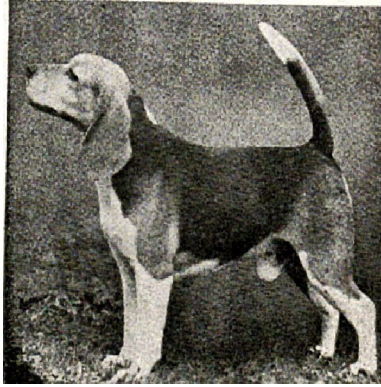
Patten Hill Trigger
Gay Roxey
Gay Belle VI

As you can see, we have a doubling up of both Patten Hill Trigger and Gay Belle VI, but they are each bred to different hounds on the two sides of the pedigree. The Gay "family" is beginning to take shape, Isn't it? This is a classic example of line breeding within a family of hounds. Frank Reese says of Gay Slide: "I consider Gay Slide (to be) the greatest hound I ever saw run and you seldom see a Small Pack winner that does not go back to her. She did not have to compete with the present Small Pack Age, an age that has more good rabbit dogs than any period in hound history." but Frank said she could have if Slide was living.

Frank said; some of my best hounds came at a time when I could not compete at the trials due to ill health. Three times I quit breeding due to ill health I finally learned to keep my bitch line and quickly snap back.



Fd. Ch. Bunny Run Ivan



Fd. Ch. C. S. Robin



Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Lawyer

We followed the progress of Frank Reese and his Gay hounds from his two beginning bitches Gay Belle and Gay Rose for seven generations (in the case of Gay Belle), and five generations (in the case of Gay Rose), to a bitch named Gay Slide which was (as Reese puts it)". . . the greatest hound I ever saw run..." Gay Slide's pedigree looked like this:

		Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Editor
	Gay Take	
		Gay Belle VI
	Oxford Abner	
		Patten Hill Trigger
	Glade Valley Fly	
		Gay Echo
Gay Slide		
		Fd. Ch. Smokey Wade
		Fd. Ch. Drive XV
		Gingerbread
Gay Mamie		
		Patten Hill Trigger
	Gay Roxey	

Gay Belle VI

When it came time to breed Slide, Frank Reese chose a stud named Fd. Ch. Patterson's Little King. King was at stud in 1965 with Lamar Laney, of Maiden, North Carolina. This hound was from real solid, old-time rabbit hound blood. In fact, from this juncture on, Reese makes a series of crosses to hounds that trace to "old-time" breeding. Most of these studs were from his part of the country, so you can see that he was more familiar with these males than those that were located some distance away. (Later he told me that he still sent 10 or 12 bitches to outside studs that were "all red pedigreed and mostly field champions," but that he "never got one good pup.") Frank Reese said in a letter: "When Gay Slide topped the pack we had a great pack of running hounds but it had been 25 years since we had had a good jump dog. My nephew, Lewis Herman joined me at this point and Slide was bred twice to Fd. Ch. Patterson's Little King and produced seven in two litters that were the best jump dogs I ever saw. These males were bred heavy by all the locals and I have had no problem to get jump dogs and this area is full of them. Some owners never kept the papers up but sold hounds for long prices. The RABBIT HUNTER has registered some of them. I know of no better hounds.' We must remember that with each of these crosses made to an outside stud (so to speak) Reese is bringing in 50% new blood. However, since most of the crosses involved studs that trace back to the same roots, he was not actually bringing in all new blood. He was just introducing blood from the same basic foundations but through different individuals. This is an excellent form of line breeding. One that would serve Frank Reese very well in the future. Now let's take a look at Patterson's Little King's pedigree:

Fd. Ch. Sambilly Joe
Fd. Ch. Kanauga's Trail Bound
Bardstown Fidget
Fd. Ch. Kanauga's Shiek
Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Banker
Pleasant Run Galloperette
Arcadian Ann
Fd. Ch. Jimmy's Little Sportsman
Pleasant Run Dusty
Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Lawyer
Arcadian Ann
Fd. Ch. Floyd Co. Fany
Burrfield Inky
Bodkin's Mary
Burrfield Spot II

Fd. Ch. Patterson's Little King

Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Leader

Fd. Ch. Lan-Chester's Chief Leader

Lan-Chester's Lucky Lucy

Fd. Ch. Cherokee King

Fd. Ch. Smokey Mountain Scrappy

Krueger's Lady

May's Nora

Fd. Ch. Austin's Dottle

Fd. Ch. Noble Co. Sammy

Fd. Ch. Tuneful Chase Tim

Tuneful Chase Lassie

Austin's Nell

Fd. Ch. Stinard's Sandy Sam

Austin's Susie

Marshville Daisy



Fd. Ch. Kanauga's Shiek



Fd. Ch. Lan-Chester's Chief



Fd. Ch. Jimmy's Little Sportsman



Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Leader



Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Banker



Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Lawyer

Now let me take you a generation further back by telling you what some of the hounds in the last generation trace to. First, Fd. Ch. Sambilly Joe was pure Blue Cap; Bardstown Fidget's sire was Fd. Ch. Gray's Linesman; then Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Banker was also a son of Fd. Ch. Gray's Linesman; Arcadian Ann was sired by Fd. Ch. Flip of Shady Lake; Bun-field Spot II was sired by Fd. Ch. Button's Tuffy, a son of Yellow Creek Sport; Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Leader was a brother of Pleasant Run Banker and also a son of Linesman; Fd. Ch. Noble County Sammy was sired by Fd. Ch. Sammy R; Fd. Ch. Stinard's Sandy Sam was a son of Fd. Ch. Gray's Captain and grandson of Linesman; finally Marshville Daisy was a son of Fd. Ch. Pine Hollow Nifty and a grandson of Fd. Ch. Sammy R. Pretty illustrious line-up, wouldn't you say? Indeed it was. One well-known bitch that resulted from this mating was a female named Gay Fury. Fury was best known for the hounds she produced, but that is getting ahead of my story, let's see what her pedigree looked like;

Fd. Ch. Kanauga's Shlek
Fd. Ch. Jimmy's Little Sportsman
Fd. Ch. Floyd Co. Fany
Fd. Ch. Patterson's Little King
Fd. Ch. Cherokee King
Fd. Ch. Austin's Dottie
Austin's Nell

Gay Fury

Gay Take
Oxford Abner
Glade Valley Fly

Gay Slide

Fd. Ch. Drive XV
Gay Mamie
Gay Rozey

When the time came to breed Gay Fury, Reese bred to a stud named Fd. Ch. Williams' Pointline Buddy, male was offered at stud by Ernest Williams of, North Carolina. The stud ad emphasizes Buddy ". . . works his rabbit from the point." It also that, "He Insists in keeping control of the line." Pointline Buddy was about 13-1/4 inches tall, and he was a looking hound. This hound can be found in many, n gun dog pedigrees today. I would like to note here many current pedigrees have his name William's (with apostrophe before, the s), but I want to say for the re that his stud ad always put the apostrophe after tl Since his owner's last name was Williams, I believe (contrary to popular practice) that the apostrophe should after the s. Let's look at his pedigree now:

Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Banker
Fd. Ch. Nu-Ra Buddy
Dearman's Dixie
Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Ranger
Fd. Ch. Rippling Run Ringer
Fd. Ch. Bison Town Ticker Girl
Rocky Knob Sally
Ch. High Rock Ranger
Fd. Ch. Parker's Jack
Wilson's Park Jack
Wilson's Betsie
Price's Babe II
Fd. Ch. Nottaway Buddy
Parker's Whitie
Parker's Carolina Sue

Fd Ch William's Pointline Buddy

Fd. Ch. Nu-Ra Buddy
Fd. Ch. Car-E-Line Buddy
Fd. Ch. Lynch's Meloncoly Babe
Fd. Ch. Chestua Dixie Major
Fd. Ch. Dlckburn Lad Jr.
Fd. Ch. Lake View Dixie
Banker's Lady
Fd. Ch. Williams' Missie
Fd. Ch. Bishop's Emperor
Fd. Ch. Pen's Emperor
Rogers Pemrose

Fd. Ch. Abernathy's Honeycomb
Kilby Little John
Morgan's Cutie II
Wilson's Cutie

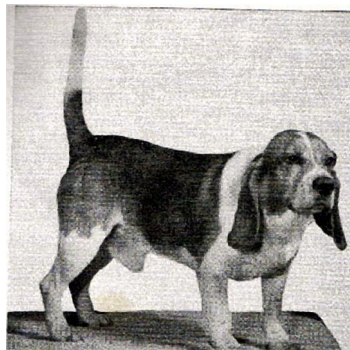
Here again, we have an illustrious pedigree that is full of old time hounds.



Ch. High Rock Ranger



Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Ranger



Fd. Ch. Car-E-Line Buddy



Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Banker



Fd. Ch. Nu-Ra Buddy



Fd. Ch. Rippling Run Ringer



Fd Ch William's Pointline Buddy
{Sire of: GAY BAKER}

Here is a run down on what of the last generation trace to. First, Banker to Gray's Linesman; Dearman's Jeny to Fd. Ch. Sammy R; Rippling Run Ringer to Fd. Ch. Blackfork Honey Boy and ' Creek Sport; Rocky Knob Sally to Fd. Ch. Conte Jack II; Parker's Jack to Banker again; and Wilson's Betsie to Fd. Ch. Bishop's Meddler; Fd. Ch. Nol Buddy to Gray's Captain and Bishop's Bugler; Pa Carolina Sue to Pine Hollow Nifty (on her dam's Nu-Ra Buddy to Banker, etc.; Fd. Ch. Lynch's Mek Babe to Fd. Ch. Step Ahead Rusty and Fd. Ch. Gray's Linesman; Fd. Ch. Dickburn Lad, Jr. to the Blue caps and Sammy R; Banker's Lady to Banker and Fc Amawalk Si; Fd. Ch. Bishop's Emperor we mentioned previously; Rogers Pemrose to Fd. Ch. Lan-Chester'Chief Leader and other descendants of Linesman; Kilby John to Fd. Ch. Dickburn Lad, Jr. again; and Wi Cutie to Fd. Ch. Lan-Chester's Chief Leader again. This cross of Gay Fury to Fd. Ch. Williams' Pointline Buddy produced a bitch named Gay Missie, and a others, males named Charlie's Ranger (owne Pressley's Beagles of Cullowhee, North Carolina), Orbit (a hound that Frank Reese speaks highly of), a male that became famous, named Gay Baker. Frank Reese said "Missie was a sweet running hound. Never bark except on rabbit scent. Run on all conditions she never gave tongue once on off game. She was close and clean and never barked once in the kennel. She was beautiful type full 13 inch hound with a better than average head and color as if she was hand painted black white and tan.. Many good hounds go back to her. Charlie's Ranger was almost identical to Missie in type, color and field ability. I sold him at about a year old and you will note that I did not put Gay to his name." Even though Missie and Ranger and Orbit were fine hounds in their own right, Gay Baker is still the famous one. Perhaps he is the most well known Gay hound of all. Here is the pedigree of Missie, Ranger, Orbit, and especially Gay Baker:

Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Ranger
 Fd. Ch. High Rock Ranger
 Price's Babe
 Fd. Ch. Williams' Pointline Buddy
 Fd. Ch. Chestua Dixie Major
 Fd. Ch. Williams' Missie
 Fd. Ch. Abernathy's Honeycomb
 GAY BAKER
 Fd. Ch. Jimmy's Little Sportsman
 Fd. Ch. Patterson's Little King
 Fd. Ch. Austin's Dottle
 Gay Fury
 Oxford Abner
 Gay Slide
 Gay Mamie

Gay Baker was whelped in 1973 and became a fine running hound. Frank told me on the phone that Baker was "... an absolute jump dog. He knew where to find rabbits, and he had an uncanny knack of producing a rabbit in short order." Also, Frank indicated that Baker was a top notch "pack dog and he had the quality of gameness that he had always bred for, because he would stick right in there and run just as long as he was left down, no matter how long that might be.

Gay Baker also seemed to be prepotent, that is he had the ability to reproduce his good qualities in his offspring a high percentage of the time. Some males (like Gray's Linesman and Yellow Creek Sport) have it, and others don't, and there's no way to know whether they do or not until after you try them. This is why Frank Reese told me that he doesn't think a male should be offered at stud until he has been proven by his owner.

Frank Reese advertised Gay Baker at stud for a time, I found his ad dated early 1980. He may have advertised him before that, but I did not learn just when. Baker was advertised as being 13-1/8 inches tall and the fee was \$100.00. Reese confided in me that he hated the hassle of having a stud dog. In fact, he told me that he never did advertise his phone number in Baker's ad, but he said it didn't do any good because the general beagling public called him at all hours regarding Baker anyway.

In spite of his limited exposure at a time when the Limbos were in their hey day. Gay Baker did make his mark on gun dog beagling. Many, many hunting hounds and SPO hounds, in addition to the Gay hounds, also trace back to him today. I will try to note a few of these later on.

Gay Baker was also offered at stud by Country Road Beagles of Heathville, Virginia later in 1980 for a short time. This may have given Baker a little added exposure and produced some hounds of note in the state of Virginia and the East. This was only a year before Gay Baker died in 1981 though at the age of 8, so his career at stud was cut short by a rather early death. Frank told me that Gay Baker died from an injury from a minor accident. He said that there were 15 hounds in the three litters from which he came, most went to gun hunters and every hound was a good one. Baker was not the best hound I ever had but was close to it. He was a great pack hound and the many who came to see him run will tell you that in a small pack or a large pack of eight couples you could pick him out at any point — up front. He had speed and he was never run out. If the running went all night and up into the next day no bitch ever finished with him and very few males. Top hound men from all over America would testify to this.

He was covered up with bitches from his first stud ad advertisement. One time he had eight bitches waiting, twice he had six waiting. Other times they came almost daily. Don Riley (from Virginia) came and ran him two days and bred a bitch and tried to get me to price him. The breeders were furious with me for letting Baker go to Virginia as Riley would not take shipped bitches. Baker probably bred more bitches than any hound ever with no show or field win. He came at the right time and exploded the theory that a stud needs to be in a certain area or have titles to stand (successfully). "You can see from Gay Baker's picture that he had a very good body, and was just a wee bit tall looking (in my estimation — maybe not yours) with very straight legs and good feet. His head is a bit smallish (again, maybe that's just my evaluation), and he has an alert and determined look in his eye. You will remember that Frank said that some of his earlier hounds had a "foxy" look (as he called it) in the muzzle. Some of that shows in Gay Baker too, I think. However I have not seen pictures on the earlier Gay hounds, so I do not have any point of reference as to how Baker compares with them in looks. Incidentally Frank said that the Watergate affair was going on about this time and he named Gay Baker for Senator Baker. I thought that was interesting.

I will come back to Gay Baker later, but at this point I need to back up and give you a run down on another Gay line tracing from Gay Slide. Gay Slide was bred to another stud (after Fd. Ch. Patterson's Little King died) called Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Drum. Drum was offered at stud by Carlyle Hall and G.R. Hall of Hamptonville. North Carolina. He may have also been a part of Frank Reese's kennel for a time. Let's look at Drum's pedigree:

Fd. Ch. Pleasant Run Banker
Fd. Ch. Nu-Ra Buddy
Dearman's Dixie
Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Ranger
Fd. Ch. Rippling Run Ringer
Fd. Ch. Bison Town Ticker Girl
Rocky Knob Sally

Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Drum

Fd. Ch. Kanauga's Shiek
Fd. Ch. Jimmy's Little Sportsman
Fd. Ch. Floyd Co. Fany
Fd. Ch. Price's Mollie
Fd. Ch. Cherokee King
Fd. Ch. Austin's Dottie
Austin's Nell

A quick glance will show you that Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Drum's sire, Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Ranger, was the grandsire of Fd. Ch. Williams' Pointline Buddy, and Drum's dam, Fd. Ch. Prince's Mollie was a full sister to Fd. Ch. Patterson's Little King (the stud that Slide was bred to the first time). So you see, there is really no new blood here, just the adding of Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Ranger to the pedigree closer up is all.

This cross of Slide to Drum produced five pups of equal type, but Frank indicated that there were only two good ones out of the five, of which one was a bitch named Gay Nell. Frank said that Nell was not a jump hound, but that she was a great running hound and she matched up well with Fury and nothing could run with them after an all day or all night run.

Gay Nell was subsequently bred to Fd. Ch. Wilson's Timmy II (we are very familiar with him, aren't we?) to produce two bitches named Gay Cindy and Gay Hasty. Let's look at their pedigree:

Fd. Ch. Wilcliffe Boogie
 Int. Fd. Ch. Wilcliffe Bannister
 Int. Fd. Ch. Black River Belle III
 Fd. Ch. Twink-L-Hill Timmy
 Fd. Ch. Car-E-Line Buddy
 Twink-L-Hill Tuffy
 Fd Ch Twinkle-L-Hill Lulu
 Fd Ch Wilson's Timmy II
 Bounce's Beamer
 Pearidge Benny
 Tick Ridge Babe
 Fd. Ch. Pearidge Hasty
 Pearidge Devil
 Fd. Ch. Pearidge Cindy anse
 Gay Cindy and Gay Hasty
 Fd. Ch. Nu-Ra Buddy
 Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Ranger
 Fd. Ch. Bison Town Ticker Girl
 Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Drum
 Fd. Ch. Jimmy's Little
 Sportsman
 Fd. Ch. Price's Mollie
 Fd. Ch. Austin's Dottie
 Gay Nell

Gay Take
Oxford Abner
Glade Valley Fly
Gay Slide
Fd. Ch. Drive XV
Gay Mamie
Gay Roxie

With this cross of Gay Nell to Fd. Ch. Wilson's Timmy II, something new has happened now that had never occurred before in the Gay hounds — a cross of Wilcliffe Boogie was brought into the line. That is somewhat surprising, because Frank Reese had not talked favorably about the "Boogie hounds" to me. He classified them as "walkie talkies," of which he did not approve. He also felt that some descendants of Car-E-Line Buddy fell into the "walkie talkie" category too. You may have noticed that another cross of Car-E-Line Buddy was brought in by Fd.Ch Wilson's Timmy II also (there had been a previous cross of Car-E-Line Buddy in Gay Baker's pedigree through Fd Ch William's Pointline Buddy too). However Reese thought a lot of Fd Ch Wilson's Timmy II as an individual hound. He liked the way he ran and besides that Timmy had terrific conformation, so evidently Reese went ahead and made the cross for those reasons. Reese later indicated that Timmy was almost too heavily built for him. Reese said" "Had I seen Timmy before I bred I would not have used him.

Gay Cindy and Gay Hasty were both top bitches, far above the best average and a number of top breeders tried to buy them as soon as they started. Hasty was bred to Williams' Pointline Buddy and I did not get a good one in the litter. Hasty was also bred to Bag Pipe and the pups were worthless. Hasty could walk a rabbit down a hardtop road and tongue it all the way. Cindy was booked to Pearson Creek Casanova due to a great winner by him on a Wilson's Timmy bitch, but Jim Exuni (of Happy Jack) talked me out of that. Cindy, Baker and Charm (Patterson's Little King x Gay Slide) made up the best trio I ever saw run. Also, we braced Cindy with Wilson's Timmy II and recorded it. I never saw a better brace run. Cindy came in heat and with no (other) plans I sent her to Pointline Buddy in spite of the cross on Hasty. Fury had had two great litters by Buddy. Gay Dash came in this litter, the only male. He was named for Mr. Dash the Watergate lawyer. The bitches in the litter were no good. I kept Dash until he was five years old, gave him away twice, and each time got him back. I never bred a bitch to him. Finally, I let (Donald) Crider see him (run) in brace with Gay Baker and sold Dash. . . (to Crider).

Reese declined to discuss Gay Dash any further than the above with me. Dash had above average conformation, somewhat like Fd. Ch. Wilson's Timmy II, and

he attracted a lot of attention just by his good looks.

After purchasing Gay Dash, Donald Crider advertised him rather extensively at stud to the general beagling public. In fact most of the Gay Dash ads were full page size with 800 or more words in them. There are a number of gundog breeders that have descendants of Gay Dash in their kennels today. Gay Dash has probably improved conformation in his descendants, however it is obvious from his silence, that even though he bred Dash, Frank Reese was not really enthusiastic about him at all.

Frank Reese said Cindy came in heat again and he thought there would be no good anyway so I will try her on Gay Baker, a young hound then that had never been bred. Gay Flag, Gay Flash, and some other good ones came from this litter (Frank said) it is the only cross I ever made that I wanted more of exactly like them. Frank made this cross eight times hounds resulting were good type, but not the best; but in the field an answer to everything that I could ask. I believe the first litter were probably better than any of the later litters." After Reese said this, I asked myself Just what made this cross different from the first cross of Gay Cindy to Fd. Ch. Williams' Pointline Buddy, and the only genetic difference that I could detect is the inclusion of Gay Fury (Gay Baker's dam) in the pedigree to make the female lines on both the sire and dam's side Gay hounds, instead of just on one side as with the Gay Cindy x Pointline Buddy cross. Take a look at the pedigree of the Cindy x Baker cross and you will see what I mean:

Gay Baker
 Fd. Ch. High Rock Ranger
 Fd. Ch. Williams' Pointline Buddy
 Fd. Ch. Williams' Missie
Gay Fury
 Fd. Ch. Patterson's Little King
 Gay Slide
 Fd. Ch. Twink-L-Hill Timmy
 Fd. Ch. Wilson's Timmy II
 Fd. Ch. Pearidge Hasty
Gay Cindy
 Fd. Ch. Lone Hickory Drum
Gay Nell
 Gay Slide

See, there's old Gay Slide there twice, and also the influence of Gay Baker comes into play too. Let's look at some of the hounds this cross produced. The first that Frank Reese

mentioned was Gay Flag. I have seen pictures of Flag and he has an almost identical body to Baker's, but it seems (from the pictures) as though he may have had an even smaller head and muzzle.

(Frank Reese said) I consider Flag to be the best sire of my experience. Too many of the top winners go back to him to list. Flag (was) bred to Fd. Ch. Muennink's Betty and three Int. Futurity Winners came from this litter. He was a great hound on Hare, but a wee bit close at the check to win at the Hare trials. When he was past 12 years old, and paralyzed in the rear legs, he dragged his rear to the field and tongued on a line with other beagles hunting with Haskel Barker and Bill Allen." A hound named Echo Valley Buddy was sired by Gay Flag. Buddy won a first in the field and two in shows in the same year. He was a great hound but was lost or stolen on a hunt, so he only bred a few bitches.

Gay Flag has several descendants that are living yet today, and he has as Reese predicted, influenced hunting hounds in a positive way a great deal. In Flag's stud ad in December of 1980, Frank Reese described him as: "A hard driving, fast hunter, lightening quick at the check, quiet in the kennel, no shyness, with the disposition of a house pet. We do not think any hound can run all the line and hold at the check and beat him. "With all of this ability in Baker and Flag I asked Reese why these hounds were not field champions themselves. He replied that he didn't have any aspirations to own a field champion, that he just bred hounds for his own pleasure, for private hunts, and an occasional field trial to test their merits against other hounds. In fact, he said that he really didn't want to own a field champion. When I asked why, he replied that it was because of his health and he cannot take the weather and long hours. Also that it was too risky to run a field champion among deer and along highways as he has always done. Frank said it takes more than a title for me to use a sire. A title means very little to me now. I never print the CBS title or whatever it is (CHB, for Certified Hunting Beagle) in pedigrees. A brace winner means a lot to me. I know I don't want any of them."

"Gay Charm, sister to Gay Fury bred to Pointline Buddy was not a good cross but some from the cross produced real well. When Charm was bred to High Rock Ranger, it produced some of the greatest ever produced in North Carolina. The Sam Deal hounds all came through Charm. Gay Charm. Cindy, and Black (High Rock Ranger x Gay Charm) made up the best trio I ever saw run...Now I will give you some records, both Gay Baker and Gay Dash have sired field champions on Large Pack on Hare and Small Pack on Cottontail. You could write a book about the wins of their grand-pups. Gay Flag and his brother Glynn's Gay Demon, full brothers, have sired field champions on the same bitch: Fd. Ch.

Cane Country Jenny (she by Dingus MacRae). Here you have two from the same cross both great producers which is very rare in both dogs and other animals."

Another male which resulted from one of the Gay Baker x Gay Cindy matings is a hound named Fd. Ch. Glynn's Gay Demon. Demon has produced quite a few hounds of note: many of them in the Deep South. At least one of Demon's sons, Fd. Ch. Ben's Creek Happy Boy and one daughter (T-BABE) are field champions, and there are probably more that I don't know about. Frank Reese was asked to comment on the Gay hounds of today, but he said that he would not do that. He said: "I am willing to pay for any advertising on my own hounds, but I am not willing to give free advertising to the dog traders." He went on to add that, "When a breeder develops a strain, I do not think anyone has ever taken over and bred them like the original breeder. Most times the strain goes out with the breeder. I think this is mostly because the new breeder does not know the weak spots." Frank Reese also said: "I saw most of the good ones in 1945 at the trials and I trained for leading kennels. I have before me pedigrees of all the great show and field winners up to 1960. I breed from the pedigree. And one good one in a family means little to me. A Baker bitch, Dream Girl was down with 57 at Upper Hudson on Hare and she dominated the runs all day winning first. I had told Pearl Baker that she was the best bitch alive. She took her picture before they ran. Second was Int. Ch. Hunters Little Annie, mate to Dingus MacRae. To get her Int. Ch. points she had to take second to Dream Girl. Third was Fd. Ch. DFJ Melody (by Murphy White). Fourth place Fd. Ch. Green Mtn. Lassie (Champlain Bucky) and fourth Fd. Ch. Cane Country Jenny (Fd. Ch. Dingus MacRae). When she was entered one of her group said she was the best hound in Deep South. She was at my kennel twice to be bred to Flag and at one time I ran her five weeks and I never found a fault. All were field champions and from different states and by different sires. The judges said she won it right down the middle. I breed only for my own use. I never try to improve the breed. I have never read the rule book. All I know about it is what others write in their articles. No one seems to agree with what it says. I have always hunted a lot alone and the important thing is to take the line and bring the game back to me."

Let me double back now and mention a few hounds that were out of Gay Missie, Baker's sister. When Missie was bred to Little Ireland's Binkey (that's right, you read correctly), she produced, among others, a hound named Gay Time. This hound was advertised in September of 1980. He was a nice looking 13 inch hound, and I believe he produced some good gun dogs. Then when Gay Missie was bred to Dutch Fork Huntmaster (the brother to Fd. Ch. Dingus MacRae), she produced a 13-1/2 inch male named Gay Blase. Gay Blase is on the list of "best males" of his that Frank Reese a letter. I believe he has produced several fine hunting hounds that run both cottontail and hare. Another hound that Gay Baker

produced was a male named Gay Rocky. Rocky was out of a well known bitch named Splitrail Betty. She was sired by Fd. Ch. Dickey's Rocky and was out of a bitch named Fd. Ch. Laudermilk's Ginger. Dickey's Rocky was a grandson of Fd. Ch. Car-E-Line Buddy. I asked Frank Reese about Gay Rocky and he didn't have much to say about him. Rocky didn't seem to be on his list of Gay hounds that he was particularly enthusiastic about. Gay Baker also produced a hound named Gay Elvis, that in turn produced a male named Fd. Ch. Mickey's Gus. This hound is owned by Mickey Garrity of Woodbridge, VA. Fd. Ch. Mickey's Gus was the 15 inch dog winner of the U.B.G.F. (United Beagle Gundog Federation) National Runoff in 1984. Gus himself has produced quite a number of S.P.O. winners, and even some field champions. Let me show you Gay Elvis' pedigree:



Frank notes that he considered Fd. Ch. River Run Dumpy to be, "A great brace hound, Pearson Creek bred, and moderate speed." He said that Elvis was used only as a gun dog. Gay Elvis was bred to a bitch named Secreferret Belle to produce Fd. Ch. Mickey's Gus. Secreferret Belle was sired by Fd. Ch. Riley's Little Rock, a dog tracing back to Fd. Ch. Twink-L-Hill Timmy and the Yellow Creeks through Bannister and Boogie. Frank said that, "Gus could win anywhere with good judges." I asked Frank Reese how many hounds he normally kept and he replied that he ". .runs about a dozen." He also said that he had been cutting some timber and clearing it each day as well as running hounds. I'd say that that is remarkable for a man in his middle eighties. I also asked Frank what hounds he had today (in 1990), and he said that he had had until recently a fine male called Gay Deal that was eight years old, but that he had given him to a hunting buddy who lived near him.

Fd. Ch. Williams' Pointline Buddy

Gay Baker
Gay Fury

Gay Flag

Fd. Ch. Wilson's Timmy II

Gay Cindy
Gay Nell

Gay Deal

Fd. Ch. Limestone Tiny
Fd. Ch. Kidd's Steady Eddie
Fd. Ch. Sandy Ridge Tiny

Deal's Betty

Fd. Ch. River Run Dumpy

Gay Queenie
Gay Charm

Another hound which Reese had until recently is a male named Gay Max (Gay Flag x Bedlam Gay Mandy).

Fd. Ch. Williams' Pointline Buddy

Gay Baker
Gay Fury

Gay Flag

Fd. Ch. Wilson's Timmy II

Gay Cindy
Gay Nell

Gay Max

Ch. Bedlam Tiger Talk
Ch. Bedlam Basil
Valley Mills Gussie

Bedlam Gay Mandy

Ch. Bedlam Tiger Talk
Ch. Bedlam Echo
Ch. Chillybrook Cheerful

As you can see, Max has a double cross of Ch. Bedlam Tiger Talk on his dam's side. This is a cross that Frank used very successfully. Bedlam Gay Mandy has produced some fine hounds. She is still living and is with Tyra Langdon now.

A third hound that Reese had until recently is Gay Rover. Reese says that Rover was his "top stud." Gay Rover is now with Tyra Langdon of 220 Old Drug Store

Road, Gamer, NC 27529. He really is high on the breeding behind Rover. Here is Gay Rover's pedigree:

Ch. Rockaplenty's Wild Oats
Ch. Bedlam Tiger Talk
Ch. Chillybrook Lemon Fizz
Ch. Bedlam Basil
Little Ireland's Irish
Valley Mills Gussie
Wagon Wheel's Water Color
Gay Rover
Gay Roll
Gay Roll II
Gay Missie
Gay Doll
Gay Baker
Gay Idol
Splitrail Betty

A hound that is well known to ARHA breeders is Hamilton Trapper John, owned by Paul Hamilton of Rt. 2, Box 76D, Clintwood, VA 24228. Frank Reese points out that this hound has half Gay blood. His dam is pure Patch breeding, but his sire is a hound named Perry's Gay Trapper. Here is Gay Trapper's pedigree:

Dutchfork Huntmaster
Gay Blase
Gay Missie
Perry's Gay Trapper
Gay Roll II
Gay Doll
Gay Idol

Frank says that Gay Trapper is "one of the most beautiful hounds ever produced at Gay Kennels." I understand that Gay Trapper was lost in southeastern Kentucky. Trapper John, his son, is still with Paul Hamilton (as of April 1991). Still another Gay male is Gay Tuck.

Tuck is now with Tvra Langdon and I understand that he recently bred Bedlam Gay Mandy to him. This is a cross that produced . Gay Major and some other fine Gay hounds. Here is his pedigree:

Gay Baker
 Gay Flag
 Gay Cindy
 Gay Deal
 Fd. Ch. Kidd's Steady Eddie
 Deal's Betty
 Gay Queenie
 Gay Tuck
 Williams Pointline Buddy
 Gay Baker
 Gay Fury
 Gay Idol
 Fd.Ch. Dickey's Rocky
 Splitrail Betty
 Fd. Ch. Lauder milk's Ginger

When I talked to Frank on the phone, he indicated that there was a time, back in the '50s and early '60s when brace hound breeders emphasized "all red pedigrees" -that is, all field champions in the pedigree. Regarding this latter fad, Reese says: "For a long time I bred for all red pedigree. Nothing hurt me as much as that idea." Another time he said: My bitches have been used on at least 50 field champions. Many went the hard way — by rail. My worst time though was when I used 10 or 12 bitches on top rated Walkie-Talkie' advertised studs. I never got one good one from this bad experience." So, I guess Frank Reese was human too, and he made mistakes just like the rest of us. However, he learned from each failure and he didn't do it over again.

At one point on the phone I asked him what he would do differently if he had it to do over again. He responded: "Oh, a lot! Law me, an awful lot. I've made a lot of mistakes, and I couldn't do a whole lot of things because of my health. I wouldn't say that I've learned what to do though, you'd better say that I've learned what not to do." Sensing that we were onto something important, I pressed him to tell me what he would not do. He answered: 'Well, for one thing stay away from outcrosses. They are dangerous. You've got to stay in the same family (once you've found the family that suits you).'" When I asked what else he replied: "Stay away from the 'Walkie-Talkies'." Then he went on to tell me all the faults of the slower hounds naming two bloodlines that were popular in the hey day of the brace trials. Here I think I should exercise some discretion and not name the particular hounds (like he did) but rather admonish you hunters and gun dog fans to be vigilant and watch your own

pack for potterers, runners of off game and the like, and cull out the offenders mercilessly, or else they will cause you untold grief. I believe this is the essence of what Frank was saying.

Here are some more questions that was asked of Frank on the phone:

What qualities do you look for in a beagle?

Reese: I look for type (conformation) first. The feet are very important and the legs too if you're going to have speed and endurance. A good head is important, but I've never been able to get that though. You can breed almost everything else into the line but type. You've got to start out with it.

What faults do you dislike the most in a beagle?

Reese: A quitter. I hate that. It is the worst fault of all. If a hound is game, he'll stick in there no matter what. A babbler is almost as bad, and a confirmed backtracker. I suppose I could tolerate some other lesser faults, but those three are the worst. There's no place in my kennel for a quitter especially.

What system of breeding do you most use?

(I think I know the answer to this, but I'll ask anyway just for the record.) Reese: Line breeding is the only way. Crossbreeding is like breeding a Leghorn hen to a Rhode Island Red rooster.

Would you discuss 'line control' briefly?

Reese: It's very important. A good example of a hound with excellent line control was Wilson's Timmy II. He never had many checks at all. [That's exactly what Tom DornIn said about him, isn't it?] and he never made a wrong turn. He had control of the line and he was not going to give it up. My hounds are like that now.

How has the speed of your hounds changed over the years?

Reese: The only way to compare would be by direct competition (and, of course that is impossible). Both Slide and Baker (which we talked about in the last installment of the Gay hounds) ran with their heads up with speed to run up front with any hound that ran with line control and did not cast over at a check. Both would run all day or all night and more with the same speed. Slide had very little competition in her day. Baker had more competition as the Small Pack movement was on its way and there were more good hounds in Baker's time and

since then any time in beagle history. Both came at a time when I could not run at the trials due to bad health. (More recently) I have had no problem with speed on the hare circuit. Tyra Langdon's article on my hounds (titled Gay Line Control) on the Swampers tells an accurate account of them. (Langdon's) Gay Ann is a sister to Fd. Ch. B & K Rock that I gave Ben Muennink that made a record on hare.

Are there any hounds that you did not own, but you have admired?

Reese: I have seen a lot of good ones come by with the handlers at the old Tar Heel Club. I have run in the hare trials for 10 years and I have seen so many good hounds that I would not start to list them all. I feel though that Fd. Ch. Contentnea Jack and his son, Contentnea Jackson were the best males of their time. They did not have the competition that we have now though. I bred to Jack eight times. He was not a great sire, but he did well on a few bitches.

Jack was in Gay Mamie's pedigree way back wasn't he?

Reese: Yes, as the grands ire of Grayline Venture. Jack's sire was Hiram Wade and his dam was Winkle Wade. She was sired by Wing Ridge Ebony (the sire of Fd. Ch. Burrfield), Oxford Abner was one of the greatest I ever saw. A friend bred him with my hounds while I was in the sanitarium."

Well, I had better bring this discussion to a close. In summary, Frank Reese is a "pioneer" producer of hunting beagles. He started way back before the brace hound movement slowed their beagles down, and he managed to advert their influence. Since he didn't advertise, Few outside of the Carolinas knew about him until "Baker came along. Then, when he advertised Baker . the word got out and began to spread. Now today, more and more breeders are looking to him for advice and counsel in their own breeding programs. He told me that both "Better Beagling" and "The Rabbit Hunter" were "after him" to write articles for them, and that, if he could get a break from answering all the letters for a while, he might just do it, but that he wasn't going to sacrifice time that he ordinarily gave to his hounds. As I have said before, families of hounds tend to express the personalities of their owners. That is certainly true in the case of the Gay hounds. They are generally known to be lean, eager hunters, with absolutely no quit in them. They are only reflecting the courage and stamina of their breeder, Frank Reese. He is a man who didn't let years of illness stop him. Instead, with the help of modern medicine, a lot of faith, and sheer dogged perseverance, he threw off the disabling disease and went on to live life to the very fullest. In so doing, he produced scores of fine rabbit hunting beagles that a lot of people have enjoyed for countless hours. Thank you, Frank! I appreciate your life time of dedication to breeding great hunting hounds!

