

## **FOREVER COCHINS**

*By E. H. Miller, 1953 (May, 2019)*

It was during the last week of October, away back in 1910, while attending a Halloween party at the home of a school chum, that I saw and became infatuated with Cochin bantams. The following week a pair of Black Cochin bantams had found a new home in our back yard.

During the 43 years since then, I have bred and shown fifteen varieties of chickens, and during that time I have never been without Cochins, either large or bantams. I have had all four colors in both the large fowl and bantams, yet the blacks and whites are my favorites, with the Partridge next in line. In fact, the entire Asiatic family as described in the Standard of Perfection is my choice for chickens.

At present I have some three hundred Standard White and Black Cochins, mostly Whites. They roam about as they please on a half-acre of grass, and their bodyguard happens to be a pair of Blue Peafowl. "Old Toby", the big Blue Peacock, who is twenty years old, looks after them very well, night and day, and strange as it may sound, at any time of the day or night, should any dog, cat, or stranger invade the poultry yard, he gives out one of those weird jungle-like calls, which can be heard for half a mile. After hearing that cry, it is best to investigate, for he knows when all is well.

Some breeders have said that a Cochin does not lay very well. I don't quite agree with that statement. I have had a few females who did not lay but a very few eggs and that might have been my fault. I do not use females who are not good layers. It is a fact that we have eggs and plenty of them the year around, for they are fed for eggs also. While I have never trap-nested any of my Cochins, yet from an observation, I am certain that some of my hens laid as many as 180 eggs in their first year, and the production diminishes as they grow older. I have seven hens all of whom are five years old, and two of them are laying now. My pullets at the age of six months began to lay in September. So, a Cochin is not a poor layer.

And as for fertility, my hatching some two hundred youngsters will attest for the fertility angle. I did not trim a Cochin this year and with six matings, some two of them, stud matings and two more with the blacks, I have again had excellent hatchability.

In mating, on Cochins much can be said, and many will not agree with you on the subject, so there is no use taking up too much time with that, for mating any chicken, half of the success depends solely on your definite knowledge of the background of those chickens you want to mate.

How can someone else tell you how to mate your pens? It just can't be done.

In my matings and in Whites only, I have kept three distinct families and each of these families have been mated each year for a certain purpose, or rather there is one real objective in that family. Yet the matings in those families are mated by considering the past ancestry and present qualifications.

All of my Cochins have a toe mark, or other identification, showing which family or pen they came from. If you were to point out one of these youngsters and were to ask me the mating, I could give it to you without looking at the toe mark, for I know the parents of all the chickens in the yards.

The reasons are obvious, for every offspring will definitely possess an outstanding characteristic of the parents and whichever characteristic is most pronounced in the parent will be intensified in the offspring of that family.

From my observation and matings, I have divided each male and female into ten sections, using those as the basis for matings, and where one may fail, the other must excel in that section to offset it.

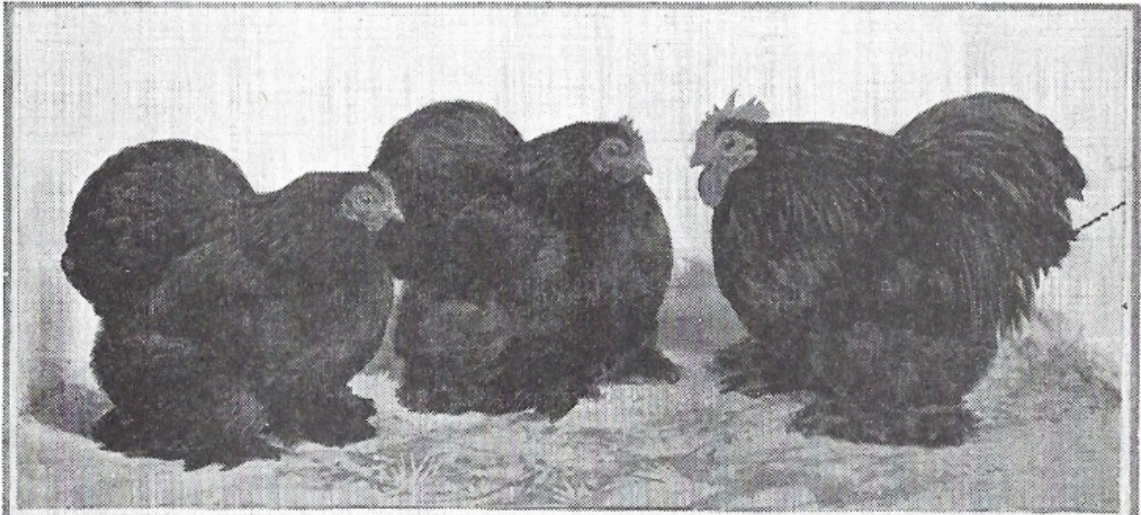
I like to mate good old aunts with a good-looking nephew, or an old uncle with a good-looking well-formed niece. Those are good matings.

In the Black Cochins, it is difficult to maintain that sound black with a green sheen which is free of purple or plum color in certain sections. I find in the Blacks a long narrow feather in body and a pointed feather in the primaries, you can look for heavy hock feathering and sometimes stiff feathers – they are congruous.

In the White Cochins, we are able to get that good basic white with a silvery overcast on the females. However, the males still come with straw color, and from my observation, sun, shade, yellow corn and green grass have nothing to do with it.

In closing, please remember that there is no finer chicken dinner ever been served unless the chicken was a good big Cochin. We eat 'em and if you will raise some you will like 'em, too.

*[Editor's Note: Over the years, winning Cochins by E. H. Miller (Cochin Corners) of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, were frequent subjects of Arthur O. Schilling.]*



FIRST PRIZE OLD TRIP, BLACK COCHIN BANTAMS, MADISON SQUARE GARDEN JAN. 1946.  
Bred And Owned By, E. H. MILLER, "COCHIN CORNER", Mt. VERNON, OHIO.