

Editor's Note: The year was 1874. Black, Buff, Partridge and White Cochins, in both Bantam and Large Fowl, were the first Varieties to be recognized by the APA and ABA. Buff and Partridge were the popular varieties; Whites and Blacks were considered 'rare' varieties! It would be 91 years until the next round of Varieties were recognized in 1965.

Origin and History of Cochins **Frank L. Platt (1925)**

PART ONE - LARGE COCHINS

Breed Characteristics: Skin, yellow. Eggs, brown shelled. Females become broody and rear their own young. Shanks, yellow and fully feathered. Toes, full feathered. Plumage, long, soft, profuse. Head, moderately large. Face, smooth with docile expression. Combs, single. Eyes, red. Ear lobes, red. Desired weights, Cock 11 lbs., Hen 8-1/2 lbs., Cockerel 9 lbs., Pullet 7 lbs. A three-foot fence will confine.

Serious Defects: Small size. Effeminate heads on males. Low egg production and poor fertility. Hard, short or tight feathering. Stiff feathering at hocks. Legs not set wide apart, letting the body well down. Stringy feather on back of female. Middle toes bare of feathering. Long, scantily feathered legs. Narrow bodies.

BUFF COCHINS

Serious Defects: Red on wing bows of male. Patchy or uneven color in females. Pronounced black and white in main tail feathers or wing flights.

Origin: Cochins came originally from China. They were first known as Shanghais, having come from the port of Shanghai in China, and the breed may have never seen the French province of Cochinchina. The first Cochins were received in Connecticut about 1847. The celebrated English stock of Sturgeon was received in the same year. It was plain that here was a distinct and new breed. Excitement followed its introduction. Exaggeration led to statements about the males being big enough to eat off of the top of barrels, and the females being tame and fluffy like kittens. The ensuing enthusiasm was known as the "hen fever", and in no small sense the Cochin became the father of the chicken fancy.

The Kinkee or golden flower variety, of which the Buff Cochin is a refinement, is most highly esteemed in parts of China where vari-colored fowls of this breed are kept. No one knows the antiquity of the breed. It appears to have been largely developed in retreats that correspond to European monasteries. The immortality of all forms of life and a special religious significance attached to large size, probably had a bearing on the development of the breed in the period of its early history. Just how the factors for large size and full feathering got into the germ plasm for the Cochin, is not known, and those who assume that the Gallus Bankiva is the single primitive ancestor of all domesticated breeds of poultry have difficulty reconciling that view with the Cochin breed.

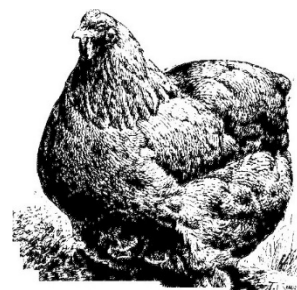
History: The Buff Cochin was popular in the 1850's and '60's, but as a show fowl it reached the height of its popularity in the early 1890's. In 1893, Major Theo.

Sternberg, of Kansas, reported Cochin pullets hatched Jan. 38, 1893, laying June 25. About this time extremely long feathered English Buff Cochins were imported. Some of these birds were disqualified because of long stiff hock feathers, called vulture hocks. Nevertheless, the full feathered type exerted an influence on the American stock, and the Cochin began to lose its utility qualities. For a number of years flocks of utility Cochins were to be found, but at last they ran out and the modern Cochin is bred purely for exhibition purposes.

Full Feathered Buff Cochin Hen

Description: A male to meet the description of the "Grand Cochin", should be a large, massive, full feathered bird. His breast should be deep and full and tip forward. His saddle should be long and full, the cushion of the back rising to a short, well spread tail. The plumage on legs and toes should be very full. The female presents rounded lines, having a round, deep breast, and a round, full cushion that practically covers her tail. She should be full feathered down to the ground.

The color should be an even shade of golden buff. The early Cochins came in different shades, brown, cinnamon, lemon, orange, etc. Today a level shade of



bright buff is most desired. It is not lemon, neither has it the least tendency to show red. The hackle, saddle and wing bows of the male should be a lustrous golden buff. The breast of the male, and back and body color of the female, should be of one tone of golden buff, free from and streaked or patchy appearance.

Mating: Type is of first importance. This is largely dependent upon plumage development. A short, hard feathered bird is always deficient in type. Do not breed such a one.

By breeding birds so fully feathered on legs and feet that there is little daylight under them, a rather short leg has been bred. In some cases, this has been accompanied by less bone elsewhere and the small frames have resulted in small size. Select big boned birds. Select females with round heads and as smooth faces as possible, and males with strongly masculine heads. It is usual to clip the fluff below the vent of both males and females to secure better fertility.

Typical Buff Cochin Male

Black and white in wings and tail are old defects, difficult to entirely eradicate. In a good breeding male, the breast and sides of body match evenly, and blend into a lustrous hackle and saddle. The under plumage should be as buff as possible. Birds that have light colored quills running through their feathers produce shafty chickens. When lemon and orange birds are mated together the chickens are uneven and mealy in color. The breast and body of the male should match the color of the females as nearly as possible. Patchy color in the females is sometimes due to their being faded or not having been shaded during the molt. If such females carry the right kind of color in their necks and rich undercolor in the long feathers on sides of body, they will produce nice cockerels.



PARTRIDGE COCHINS

Serious Defects: White showing in the surface plumage. Indistinct penciling in female. Muddy color in male.

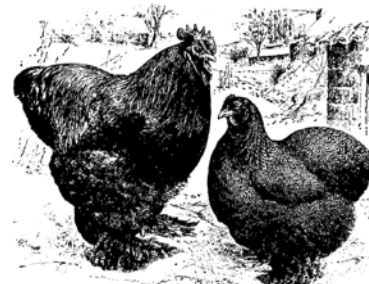
Origin: Partridge Cochins were developed from the dark Buff Cochins (called Grouse Cochins), of early years, and later Dark Brahma blood was infused. This cross produced the black-breasted Partridge Cochin male and also gave rise to the once Standard, pea combed Partridge Cochin. It was because of this cross that the Partridge Cochin long remained somewhat inferior to the Buff Cochin in that massiveness and fullness of feather that are truly the first property of the Cochin, but are not possessed to the same extent by the Brahma.

Wm. H. Brackett, of Boston, produced the first of the modern Partridge Cochins in the 1870's. Geo. W. Mitchell, of Bristol, Connecticut, became the greatest breeder of the variety. He defeated western exhibitors at Indianapolis in 1888, and won all firsts at Boston, 1921. No strain in the history of pure-bred poultry in America, has had greater fame. At the New York show, 1907, Mr. Mitchell sold a single pen of four females and one male, for \$1,000.

Description: This variety should approach the buffs in type and feathering as nearly as possible.

The male has a gorgeous orange-red neck and saddle. This color is accentuated into rather richer red on the wing bows. There should be a black stripe in both the hackle and saddle plumage. The breast, body and tail should be a lustrous greenish black.

The ground color of the females is reddish bay, marked with the crescentic bands of black, called penciling. This penciling is more clearly defined after the pullet becomes a hen.



Partridge Cochin Pair

Mating: Mr. Mitchell introduced no new blood into his flock of Partridge Cochins from 1894 to 1922. At Boston, 1920, he showed an eleven-pound cockerel and his pullets were as big as hens. He bred by single mating.

His first cock was the sire of the first and second cockerels, also the first, second and third pullets. That cock has a red shaft in his hackle and saddle feathers, not a stripe so solid black in center that the quill of the feather was also black. The color of the wing bow was richer than the neck and saddle color. Mr. Mitchell, in single mating, did not demand a continuation of one color in his males. He preferred a happy blending of colors. He maintained that if a male were as dark in hackle and saddle as in wing bows and

back, the pullets produced, would come smokey in ground color; and if the male were as light in wing bows and top of back as in hackle and saddle, the pullets he sired would be too light.

He wanted to blend the red and black of this variety into a brilliant, striking combination, and he succeeded. He never insisted on dark undercolor. He never insisted on a neck hackle in his females as dark in color as their heads. By giving ground to natural tendencies, he produced a true breeding line of birds, the males and females of which could be mated together for the production of exhibition birds of both sexes.

In order to perfect the full feathering of his birds he purchased a pen of Buff Cochins to study, and bred them for several years, not exhibiting them but particularly observing their leg and toe feathering as well as their general set up.

WHITE and BLACK COCHINS

These are the rare varieties with the same breed characteristics of other Cochins. The Whites should be pure white in plumage; and the Blacks, a lustrous, greenish black. In mating, the three great factors are adequate size, full feathering and purity of color.

White Cochins are inclined to run a bit small. Some pullets with fresh faces that indicate vigor are seen from time to time. They should be more popular.

The Blacks bid fair to be very popular at one time, being harder feathered than the Buffs and less inclined to persistency in setting. Buff blood was infused to produce better type and more size.

PART TWO - BANTAM COCHINS

Cochin bantams are bred in four varieties, Buff, Partridge, White and Black, and they should be replicas in miniature of the large Cochins of those same varieties, except the Cochin bantam appears to have a comb that is somewhat larger in proportion to its total bulk – an accentuated characteristic of a bantam. For a description of the Cochin breed, its characteristics, type, etc., see Large Cochins. These bantams should weigh not more than 30 oz. for cock, 26 oz. for hen and cockerel, and 24 oz. for pullet.

BUFF COCHIN BANTAMS

The Buffs are the oldest of the Cochin bantams. It is supposed that they have been bred in China for not less than ten centuries. They were first imported to England from China about 1860, when they were known as Cochin-China bantams, and later as Pekin bantams. The original Pekins, like the early Shanghais, were longer in leg, less profuse in feather and hotter in color than the modern bird. Louis Paul Graham and Thos. F. McGrew were the first American fanciers to tone down the color of Buff Cochin bantams; this they did by crossing their reddish buff bantam males with White Cochin bantam females, back in the nineties of the past century.

In the show season of Oct. 1912 to Feb. 1913, there were 2,131 Cochin bantams exhibited at poultry shows in the United States, according to the official report. Cochin bantams were the most popular breed in the American fancy at that time, and Buffs lead the four varieties of Cochins.

There were two types of Buff Cochin bantams, which contended for position early in this century, the winning type which was small with soft buff surface color, but usually showing some white in wings, and the older fashioned, short legged, long feathered bird that had some reddishness on wing bows. The latter had the long foot feathering. A pure buff wing and tail were seldom seen. These two types were then amalgamated, the soft buff color being preserved and improved, while the long, loose, feather was developed in the same blood lines. By 1915 wonderful Buff Cochin bantams were being shown. Frank F. Conway of Canada, Chas. Smith of Long Island, and Bruno and Arthur Schilling of New York, having three of the best strains. Producing even, sound true buff color has gone on apace, while the type has been developed to a point of high perfection. For mating, etc., see (large) Buff Cochins.

PARTRIDGE COCHIN BANTAMS

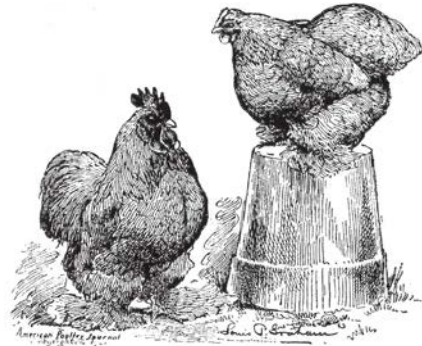
The Partridge is the largest of the Cochin bantams. It usually has longer legs than the Buffs or Blacks. A large, leggy Cochin bantam is not typical of the breed, and the aim of breeders is to modify and correct these two faults. One difficulty of the Partridge color in a bantam results from the size of individual feather in the female's back, which is hardly large enough to carry triple penciling to the best advantage. The beautiful color of the large Partridge Cochin has not been successfully duplicated in the bantam species of this race. For mating, etc., see (large) Partridge Cochins.

WHITE COCHIN BANTAMS

This variety is bred quite small, especially by English breeders. One criticism of English bantams is that they are frequently too small to be useful. Very small size may reduce vitality, and it usually does reduce length and wealth of feather. This is sometimes made up by long toe feathering and stiff hock feathering, points to guard against in White Cochin bantams.

BLACK COCHIN BANTAMS

In point of popularity, Black Cochin bantams follow the Buffs. They should be of true Cochin type and greenish black in color. David A. Nichols of Connecticut was one of their principal improvers. In mating, special attention should be given to length and softness of feather. Stiff hock feathers are very objectionable. For mating, etc., see (large) Cochins.



Buff Cochin Bantams