

Kitten History: Abyssinian

This beautiful breed continues to capture awards and the hearts of cat lovers.

Stacy Hackett

Your Abyssinian kitten has quite a regal air, doesn't he? Maybe he knows he comes from a long line of cats, and that his is thought to be one of the oldest known breeds in the cat fancy.

Look closely at your kitten. You may notice he resembles the Egyptian cats depicted in ancient paintings and sculptures. Like all Abyssinians, he has a bit of a wild, jungle look attributed to his African wildcat ancestors.

The first mention of Abyssinians in the cat fancy came in 1872, when Harpers Weekly reported on the December 1871 Crystal Palace cat show, taken by the Abyssinian Cat. Unfortunately, modern Abyssinian breeders cannot trace their cats lineage back to such cats.

Geneticists believe the breed started with cats brought to England from Calcutta and other parts of India. The Abyssinian was refined by British breeders in the early 1900s. In the late 1930s, several top-quality cats made their way to America to start this countrys breeding programs. The Aby soon rose quickly in popularity, with one Abyssinian taking 2nd Best All American Cat in 1965, Best All American Cat in 1966, and 3rd Best All American Cat in 1967. These beautiful cats continue to capture awards and the hearts of cat lovers.

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