

"People We Honor"

By Wayne Willmann, Cleveland, Ohio

When I was invited to write about people who were active in the formation and development of our "Rabbit Beautiful" and the Club that sponsors it, a flood of names rushed through my mind. It would take a book to tell you about all of the wonderful people who had a part in making our Club and favorite breed what they are today. I can tell you about a few special people in the space available.

FRANK EICHERT — heads the list. He lived in Jersey City, N.J. When I visited with him and had lunch with him and Mrs. Eichert in their cozy home in April 1957, he told me many interesting things. That was the longest lunch hour I ever experienced. It lasted until after 3 p.m. Frank was the first importer of German Checkered Giants to America in 1910. He paid as much for solid colors (selfs) as he did for marked stock. The German breeders were more interested in type and size than the shape and location of markings, because their primary use was for food. Only selfs were used for breeding who had the best markings hidden beneath the surface color. He gave me his secret for selecting the self with the best markings. I had received the same information from Walter B. Garland in 1930. My best of breed (216 shown) at Springfield, Illinois, A.R.B.A. Convention 1951, was from a self black doe. Frank had the knowledge from his long experience and was willing to share with others. His importations were sold to breeders in Eastern States, also in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Importing stopped during World War I. Frank resumed importing in 1919. That was the year our specialty Club was organized. We left his home in late afternoon to visit his good friend Frank Graulich who lived a few blocks away. Mr. Graulich had a lovely small rabbitry for Checkered Giants (about 15 holes), well kept, painted in bright colors, full of ribbons won at many eastern shows. The enclosed picture was taken in front of his rabbitry by my traveling companion, Herb Layton, also a Checkered Giant booster. Mr. Eichert passed away in 1981. We honor him as the "Father of our Fancy".



Frank Eichert, Frank Graulich and Wayne Willman in front of the Graulich Rabbitry, Jersey City, 1957.



Leonard Biskie, MI (Left)
Wayne Willmann, OH (Right)



Wilford Wells, OH



Jeanne Maddox, OH



Marvin Kroening, WI



John I. Scott, IN



Chester Jenkins, IN



Gerald Ross, NY (Left)
George Berl, NY (Right)



Joe Gognat, KY