

# Meet Your Breeders!

## Major Al Braun ~ Henty P'Kenya Basenjis

Major Al Braun is familiar to modern readers of Susan Coe's *The Basenji: Out of Africa to You* as an early advocate of hunting with Basenjis and contributor of the "Training the Basenji for the Field" section. His Henty P'Kenya Basenjis are a foundation behind many of today's modern Basenjis, and contributed to the founding of Shirley Jones's Hoo Basenjis, Cecelia Wozniak's "of Woz" Basenjis, and many other kennels.

We're very pleased to interview him.

### How did you get started in Basenjis?

In early 1960, while I was stationed in Spain, I saw a pup which belonged to a fellow Air Force member who had bought a pair of "Kiljongo" Basenjis to Madrid. I fell in love with her and talked him into selling her to me. I was so taken by her that I determined to learn more about the breed, and obtained everything then available to me about Basenjis, including Veronica Tudor-Williams' "blue book." When next in England I contacted her, and she told me about a young dog sired by her CH Fleet of the Congo who was entered in an upcoming show. I went to see the breeder, Mrs. Nicholson, and was greatly impressed by Circus Boy of the Bambuti. With a lot of persuasion, I was able to buy him from her.

### Why did you start breeding? When?

It was initially unintentional. The day Circus Boy arrived in Madrid, my little bitch was in heat, and in a moment of inattention on my part, he bred her. The resulting litter, whelped in August 1960, convinced us that we were now Basenji people. When we returned to the States, we showed Circus Boy and his daughter to championships; meanwhile becoming enthusiastic about breeding and showing; and we decided that after I retired from the Air Force in early 1964 we would do that as a hobby.

### What person influenced you most strongly?

Veronica Tudor-Williams. Ever gracious, she treated this neophyte kindly in person and in correspondence; and I greatly admired what she had done for and with the breed. She and her "blue book" provided me with a wealth of information which guided me through the years.

### What have you seen improve in Basenjis over the years?

What most impressed me was the improvement in temperament in Basenjis generally.

### What do you think today's Basenji breeders need to pay special attention to?

In your enthusiasm for "new blood", don't lose sight of the breed standard.

### What advice do you have to give to a new breeder getting started?

I over-simplify, but it's still good advice. Find a mate for your Basenji that is healthy and is strong in desired characteristics where your dog may be weak.

### What dogs have you seen or owned stand out as outstanding examples of the breed, and why?

Cambria's Ti-Mungai and Reveille Recruit – they exemplified a standard of excellence which I hoped to achieve in my breeding program.

Circus Boy of the Bambuti finished his championship in his first five shows under all-breed judges such as Derek Payne, including a group placement. He completed his CD with high scores in three straight trials. In his short life he sired five champions – three Henty P'Kenya; and Shirley Jones' first litter which produce CH Harlequin of Hoo and CH Hollyberry of Hoo. He was also a great hunting dog and a gentle loving

companion. Tragically, he was killed in an accident a year after achieving his titles. I am convinced he could have gone on to greatness. Of my own breeding, Am Can CH Henty P'Kenya's Chili Pimiento, Am Can CD. Unfortunately, after I retired from Basenji activities, his owners were not interested in showing or breeding, so this potentially outstanding showman and sire lived out his days as a beloved family companion.



**CH CIRCUS BOY OF THE BAMBUTI, CD**  
*above*

**AmCan CH HENTY P'KENYA'S CHILI PIMIENTO, AmCan CD**  
*left*

**What do you feel are your most significant achievements with the breed?**

I convinced a lot of folks that Basenjis are an excellent hunting breed, especially those who went hunting with me, and people who hunted with dogs I had sold them. At a time that Basenjis supposedly were very difficult to train (some said impossible) Basenjis of my training achieved high scores en route to their C.D.'s and convinced others that it could be done. In 1970, two of my Henty P'Kenya champion bitches went Best Brace in Show in an all-breed show in Atlanta. I believe this was a first.

During my tenure as President of the Basenji Club of America, we achieved harmony within the Club despite having some contentious members.

**Anything else you would like to say?**

In 1973 I had to, regretfully, cease breeding, showing and hunting with Basenjis when I had a heart attack and we learned that my late wife, Kitty, had cancer. Though I have not been active since, I continue to keep up with all that is going on in the Basenji world through BCOA, the breed magazines, and occasionally when I am able, by attending a show. ♦

**MAJOR AL BRAUN AT HIS 85th BIRTHDAY PARTY!**

**We wish you many more happy birthdays!**

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