

Shieling Kennels

By: Muriel Lee

A brief history of the kennel built by T. Howard Snethen.

T. Howard Snethen was born in 1915 on a farm in Nebraska where his love for animals flourished. In addition to the usual dogs, cats, chickens, and cattle, Howard had a pony that he trained to do tricks. Along the way, he became an accomplished horseman. He graduated from the University of Nebraska where he was a field and track star and was selected as a reserve to the U.S. Track and Field Olympic team. After graduation, he moved to Wisconsin and later to Pittsburgh where he worked in the administrative offices of a large steel mill. From his photos he appears to be a tall, dapper, and handsome man.

Howard became active in Scottish Terriers in the 1930s and chose "Shieling" as his kennel name. In Scotland, in the spring, the sheep are moved to fresh pastures up in the mountains and the herders stay for the season in huts called "Shielings." Howard's first Scotties were strongly bred on the Heather/Albourne lines. His first brood bitch, Dark Maid, was exceptional and became the backbone of his breeding program.

Eventually Howard, his wife Pam, and their Scotties moved to Sangamon Farm in Dewittville, NY, where Pam still resides. In addition to the Scottish Terriers, the Snethens had a herd of up to 100 Scottish Pol cattle, which Howard bred, showed, and judged.

Howard looked for good expression in a Scottie, as well as a proper eye, well-placed ears, good shoulder layback, a short back, and good movement. It was unusual at the time, but the Snethens did all of the grooming, and Howard showed the dogs, always in top Eastern competition. In the ring, he was considered a force to be reckoned with.



The winners for the kennel were many: Ch. Shieling's Stylist, Ch. Shieling's Designer, Ch. Shieling's Flash, Ch. Shieling's Masterkey, and Ch. Shieling's Insignia were Best in Show winners, and all had been conditioned and shown by Howard. He competed against the top handlers in a breed that was very popular at the time. He was known as a master groomer and a great competitor.

The high point for the kennel was at the 1945 Westminster Kennel Club dog show where Howard piloted Shieling's Signature to the Best in Show spot over 2800 entries – the first Scottie to do so since 1911. The February 14, 1945, *New York Times*, in an article written by Henry R. Isley, it was breathlessly noted, "Shieling's Signature, a Scottish terrier closely approaching the ideal of the standard of the breed, last night gained best-in-show title in the dramatic climax of the sixty-ninth annual all-breed show of the Westminster Kennel Club. It was a brilliant finale to one of the best of the recent exhibitions. About 12,000 persons proclaimed the victory, and after the announcement of the award was made, hundreds of enthusiasts flocked into the ring to get a close-up view of the new champion of champions...Signature has about everything that can be demanded of a Scottish Terrier. He is short-coupled, has a grand front and a most beautiful and typical head



