

NOTE: I am typing the article exactly as written. If I have made notes, they are in RED. Dog names and ancestors are printed in BLUE for ease of seeing the information. This article is complete as written by Dr. Thornton in "German Shorthaired Pointer Activities" copyright 1953.

My Experience with the German Shorthaired Pointer

By C. R. Thornton, MD

Rather than leave the high point for my closing sentence, I am going to wax bold and put it first. The German Shorthaired Pointer exceeds all that I had ever expected to find in one dog and then has some to spare. I was compelled by circumstances to be an *all purpose dog* man. I was born and raised on a farm in central Ohio where rats and chicken thieves were bad. My Dad being a practical man, compelled me to have a dog that would kill rats with enthusiasm and a watch dog beside. I always had a talent for getting anything out of a dog that he might have stored away in his latent brain cells. When a new dog came to our place I went about the rat killing game with a vengeance. As soon as I had him ready for demonstration he was put on trial before my judge (Dad). In a very short time I had him barking at any stranger that got near the house. My dog's education and home was then complete. Next was my hunting pal. He had to be able to handle rabbits and possum as that was my main source of pin money. Squirrel came in next, which was always welcome on my mother's table. My first hunting implements were: a nigger shooter, **(Remember, I am copying the article word for word. Some of it is entirely politically incorrect in today's world, using words we have done away with.)** a special hickory club with a slight crook in it, rocks and a home made bow and arrow. With these mastered I got away with a lot of rats and small game. I finally graduated to an old 20 gauge shotgun bored out from an old rifle. This I had to stand on a stump to reload but I did the work. When Mr. Rabbit got up he had to get into the brush pretty fast or I put it on him. So you will see why I early became an all purpose dog lover. I had two setters that graced my ownership before I went away to college. They were genuine all purpose dogs but it took a lot of work and patience to develop them.

At the close of World War I. I think it was in Jan/ or Feb. issue of the National Sportsman, I saw an article with three pictures of Edward Rindt's G. S. Pointers. I read and reread this article, looked at the pictures, and looked again and again. Finally I said to my wife, "If those dogs don't cost a million dollars, I am going to buy a pair." I got the ad of Mr. Rindt from the National Sportsman, and on the next mail I had a letter in the mail to him. On the second letter out I had bought a pair of dogs, the bitch to be bred before shipping. One day in early August here came the bitch but no dog. He was killed by an automobile the day they were supposed to be shipped. I met Senta at the train and hurried up to her crate. I said, "Hello, Senta." Twenty four days in a crate and she wanted out. She almost tore the crate up. "There is the man I am looking for," she seemed to say, and we were pals from that minute on. In due time she whelped seven puppies sired by **TREFF v HOHENBRUCK**. Three of them I kept as a foundation breeding stock and the rest were soon sold. I had at this time seven good setters. I hunted them together the first season, hunting Senta all the time and alternating the setters. Before next year rolled around I had sold all my setters but two and I loaned them out and have never had any desire to go back to the setters again. The facts were when the setters had finished their work, the G. S. Pointer was ready for any and all kinds of other duty that might come his way.

Senta was as near human as a dog could be, did the most unpredictable things. As a retriever she could have competed in a class of retrievers taking all breeds as she came. I have never yet seen her equal. On all upland birds she was equally good and on ducks she would sneak, crawl or do anything she could to get to point them for you. Saw her one time work a winged mallard for 30 minutes in slush ice during a blizzard until the duck decided he was not a water bird any longer. One time had her track a winged cock pheasant over a mile through wild roses, brier brush and everything he could find trying to shake her. This bird had 30 minutes the start of her. I could lay my gun and hunting coat down and tell her to watch it and that is what she did. The minute a stranger attempted to touch any guarded belonging she became vicious as a lion and I am sure she would have fought to her death to defend the article or killed the offender if he had insisted. Just leave them alone was all she wanted. I could write a book on this one dog alone.

Senta died at the age of four years just two weeks before she was due to whelp from that great dog, **JOHN NEUFORSTHAUS**. Blood poisoning due to barb wire cut on one of her teats. Money could not have bought her. **(Note, Senta, this treasured GSP, was Senta v Hohenbruck.)**

JOHN NEUFORSTHAUS was the 4th dog I imported. By this time I began to get wiser on the importing game and from now on I did not order a dog that had not had winnings on the bench and in the field. John had both and was capable of winning either on the bench or in the field in stiffest competition. Brains like a man and he used them. He saved the life of my kennel man or at least saved him a bad going by a stray bull. The bull was charging the man and almost on him when John came in the picture. The first bite from his powerful jaws changed the bull's mind and before he got out of the pasture old John had shown him a lot of tricks that the average cow dog had never read about. One day we had a young mule down that would not get up. I said, "Bite his rear, John." He ran in and all he got the first round was a mouth full of hair. I said, "Oh, bite him." That time when he ran and shut down on the mule, he got up so fast it looked like the ground has fallen out from under him.

He knew we did not allow kennel fights and he always stopped them like a well-trained policeman.

I mention these facts to show the great versatility of this breed. Every hunt I had with him was filled with new thrills. He knew that I had killed all hunting cats I found in the field, so he did it for me if he ran on to one. If he got up a tree he barked until I came and shot him out and then went on with his hunting. You know there is no closed season for a hunting cat. He never killed a cat at the home or barn. This fellow sired many fine litters of pups but was hung by a careless attendant being tied with a chain long enough to let him jump over a partition. He had many years ahead of him at the time of his death. A \$1500 offer did not even tempt me. In training young dogs he was worth more than any two men I ever had. Young **Fritz von Bitterwurz** was a pup out of John and one of his own bitches. An exact duplicate of his illustrious sire, with the exception of his light tiger color. An outstanding young dog. Have pictures of him retrieving wild geese out of Snake River when he was nine months old and the river full of slush ice. After siring a few fine litters of pups he was poisoned by hired help whom I had caught stealing from me. Fritz knew we did not kill hen birds and soon learned when he was pointing hens to back off and go on with his hunting. If a hen flushed wild on him he paid no attention to it but if a cock bird flushed wild he would stop, look back at you and bark and bawl like a hound telling you it was no fault of his, that the bird must have been a coward.

I had another dog **Artist vd Brickwedde** that was a wizard as fast and wide in the country but in heavy cover and cattails he would come in and work within range of your gun. In brushy creeks where you could not see him, he would work back and forth between two gunners flushing his birds like a Springer. Silent on hens but two sharp barks on all cock birds. I have lots of witnesses for the above statements. Fact is it has been a long time since I was called a liar about statements I made regarding these dogs. People have learned about their ability. He sired a number of litters of top pups but died at the age of four from an intestinal infection. Was an imported bench and field trial winner. The most outstanding dog I imported was **Seigers Lore**. She, herself, had many winnings in Germany and she had had seven pups that won first before I imported her. She was the most outstanding importation I made when it came to bench winners. Every pup she had looked like a sculptor's model. They were good field dogs but not as outstanding and many of the others. There were 45 winnings in the first five generations of her pedigree.

Now one may say he is just telling about his good ones. No, that is not the fact in this case. I have many more that I would love to tell you about just as thrilling and outstanding as any I have described but time and space forbids me to tell more. **Dianna von Otterstein, Jero von Buchwald, Montana Bell, Nancy v Hohenbruck, Seigers Holla Second**, and many more that should have their names on the honor roll but they will stay by me until death erases my memory.

I was once asked what we could do to improve the G. S. Pointer. That is a good question. It is a crime the way this breed was abused in their early history here in the U.S. There was one man in a near-by state that crossed them with the German Wire Haired Pointer and gave out papers as pure bred G. S. Pointers on them. I have pictures in my desk of one especially that I remember that was sent to me. "A registered G. S. Pointer," asking me if I thought he would make a good stud dog. A blind man could feel around with a stick and tell he was half Springer. Also had pictures of

some beautiful pups sent to me by one of the early officers of the breed here in the U. S. that were half Springer. Fact is they registered them falsely from Chesapeake to every traveling hound that happened along.

Breeding, itself, is an art that few men ever conquer. (Emphasis mine, J.H.)

My Hot Pen was constructed out of welded non-climbable wire six feet high with a wire top over it and wire buried in the ground 18 inches deep, well tamped in with rock. A special boarded breeding pen to the side so I knew what I was breeding and when. I had at one time 23 brood matrons and 4 imported stud dogs. Raised over 200 litters of this breed and never made a false paper in the lot. Remember in the Irish Setter they went to breeding for Champions. You all will admit that they developed a beautiful dog but ruined him for bird work. Don't tell me no. I have owned them, broken them and they are away down the list when it comes to real bird dogs. Personally I would like to see any G. S. Pointer be compelled to have so much field winning before he could become a bench Champion and I love a good looking dog. Be honest in your making papers, honest in your fellow men, do not cater to bench alone and the German Shorthaired Pointer will be out in front for many years to come. I believe I was the first man to register them in the U. S. I had a time getting by with them. Over a year and then they insisted on registering them as *German Shorthair*. I still contend that this means any German Shorthaired dog, as many German dogs are dressed in short hair. The terminal name should be Pointer, or as it is in Germany – Vorstehhund. Meaning Pointing dog.

Between the two wars I subscribed for two of the leading German Hunting Journals and was a member of the German Shorthaired Pointer Club. In this way I kept a close tab on what was doing in German Sporting Dogs. During my close watch there was about 80% of all the dogs registered under the gun dogs were German Shorthaired Pointers. Some of the breeds that are now trying to be rejuvenated here in the U. S. now were popular in the early 16th Century in Germany and at that time were controlled by the Royalty of Germany. If my memory serves me right, there were only about 250 to 300 of them registered each year in Germany according to the published records. The point is this, don't be led astray by catchy high priced ads. The German Shorthaired Pointer is still the choice of the German Sportsmen today, and if you were to order a Gebrauchshund from Germany today you would get a G. S. Pointer.

In closing it is my opinion to a careful buyer, you can get a better dog in U. S. today than you can get in Germany. The G. S. Pointer suffered the same as the German people did. Guns were taken away from them, etc. You can't develop a good dog without birds or guns. Col. Herbert Zemke, of German cleavage, American born and enthusiastic German Shorthaired Pointer owner, told me that it was pitiable the condition, and the way this breed and all others had suffered during the war. Left to rustle for themselves, stolen and carried away by U. S. soldiers. That it would take a long time for them to build up to where they were before the war. If I am fortunate enough to win a home in the Everlasting Kingdom, I am going to have Old Senta and some of my other Faithful German Shorthaired Pointers as eternal companions.

Now that my shooting days will soon be over I can sit beside my fireplace and reminisce from memory's halls many pleasant hours spent with the greatest gun dog ever produced – The German Shorthaired Pointer.