
HISTORY

Most dog breeds were developed after hundreds of years of evolution and lengthy selection by breeders. However, some breeds owe their existence to just one person.

In the second half of the 19th century, Sigismund Freiherr von Zedlitz und Neukirch, better known as 'Hegewald', created a new breed using Pointers and Poodles (German: Pudel). The breed was named Pudelpointer. Today, Von Zedlitz is still considered the most important pioneer of German pointing gundogs.

War affected this family and many others. Sigismund's relative wrote, "As a result of Russian and Polish arsons and other devastations, we lost our Silesian castles, archives and documents in 1945, [but] I can give you some information about my namesake [who was] known under the pseudonym Hegewald."

Old German Nobility

The von Zedlitz family is of old German nobility, originating from Thüringen (eastern part of Germany). The family owned castles, estates, woods and farmlands, as well as the village of Neukirch (from 1312),

MASTERMIND

SIGISMUND FREIHERR VON ZEDLITZ-NEUKIRCH (1838-1903)

AKA 'HEGEWALD'

Creator of the Pudelpointer

text and illustrations by **RIA HÖRTER**
Courtesy Sigismund Freiherr von Zedlitz, Berlin

Poland and Bohemia

To understand where and how Sigismund von Zedlitz-Neukirch grew up, it's necessary to know something about the history of middle Europe. In the 1200s, the first members of the von Zedlitz family moved to Silesia, an area belonging to Poland and Bohemia. In the 16th century, Silesia and Bohemia came into the possession of the imperial Habsburg family. From the 17th to 19th centuries, almost all Silesia belonged to Prussia. With the Treaty of Versailles (1918), the northern part of Silesia became part of Germany and a small piece was added to Czechoslovakia. However, due to political developments, part of Upper Silesia went to Poland in 1922. During World War II, the biggest part of Silesia was annexed by the Germans.

Today, 75 percent of Silesia belongs to Poland, the rest to Germany, and only a small piece is Czech territory. The village of Neukirch (Newchurch), Sigismund's birthplace, is now the Polish village Nowy Kosciol.

I was lucky to find a distant nephew of Sigismund. It was painful reading about the way the Second World

War affected this family and many others. In 1319, they built a castle close to the village. The branch von Zedlitz-Neukirch was elevated to the German nobility with the title Freiherr (Baron) in 1610; to the Hungarian House of Earls in 1722; and to the Prussian Barony in 1741.

Sigismund was born at castle Neukirch, May 24, 1838, to Wilhelm Freiherr von Zedlitz (1811-1890), a major in the Royal Prussian Army, and Luise Pischkowitz Freiin (Baroness) von Falkenhausen (1813-1839). The couple married in 1835 and Sigismund was their second child. Luise died (at age 26) when Sigismund was just over a year old. He was raised by his father's second wife, Bertha von Unruh, who died in 1857, when Sigismund was 19 years old. Wilhelm's third marriage was to Elisabeth Freiin von Seherr-Thoss Schollwitz. She was 21 years younger than her husband and only six years older than her stepson Sigismund. Sigismund had seven brothers and sisters including his half brothers Georg, Wilhelm, Gotthard and Friedrich.

German Hunting Tradition

From the time he was a boy, Sigismund was very

(He used) the pseudonym 'Hegewald' because he had been successful when hunting in the Hegewald, one of his father's properties.

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interested in his native region, the animals in the woods, hunting and hunting dogs. Various sources say that he was raised by a forester in the German hunting tradition. According to family tradition, Sigismund was educated as a lieutenant in the Hussars. After his military career, he settled as a writer of hunting literature.

On December 28, 1869, he married an English woman, Mary Bethia Woolf (1840-1897). His only son, Georg Wilhelm Edward Ernst, was born in Hermannswaldau, in 1871, when Sigismund was almost 58 years old. After divorcing his first wife, he married Ida Koppe in 1883.

From 1896, von Zedlitz was an editor of the German magazine 'Weidmann' (Hunter) and the 'Deutsche Jäger-Zeitung' (German Hunting Paper), using the pseudonym 'Hegewald' because he had been successful when hunting in the Hegewald, one of his father's properties. Although von Zedlitz had an impressive record of army service and as a politician and councillor, he wrote about himself quite modestly as a 'praktische Jäger' (practical hunter).



Map of Silesia - 1763
Neukirch is situated in the district of Liegnitz,
not far from Goldberg



The Hungarian Pudel pointer
The height of the males is up to 26 3/4 inches – females 24 3/4 inches
(Photo by Kutytar)

Revolution and Revival

In 1848, when Sigismund was 10 years old, revolution broke out in several parts of Europe, the goal being a liberal political system. For those living in the many German principalities, this revolution increased their wish for a united Germany. At the same time, these principalities lost their grip on hunting rights, and English gundogs – Pointers and Setters – became increasingly popular. During the 1870s and '80s, there was a hunting revival in Germany and the crossings between various pointing dogs increased. The results were the so-called 'Neudeutsche Hunde' (new German dogs). In the 1870s, breeders wanted to recreate the "alte Deutsche Vorstehhund" (old German pointing dog) that existed before 1848. The plan did not succeed.

Supporter

Not surprisingly, Sigismund von Zedlitz supported the preservation of the 'real German working dog'. He wrote about his plan in his book 'Der Gebrauchshund zur Jagd' (The Working Dog in the Field, 1881). Von Zedlitz's ideal dog would have a good nose, great stamina, a rough coat of sober color and a good temperament. In addition, the dog should love the water, be readily trained and fearless, and give tongue when working. Because the existing German pointing dogs did not have these qualities (according to von Zedlitz), he made an appeal to create a breed that could fulfill these requirements.

In an article published in 1881, he wrote: 'We should try, using Pointer and Poodle bloodlines, to breed excellent working dogs that will pass their qualities constantly and brilliantly to their descendants.'

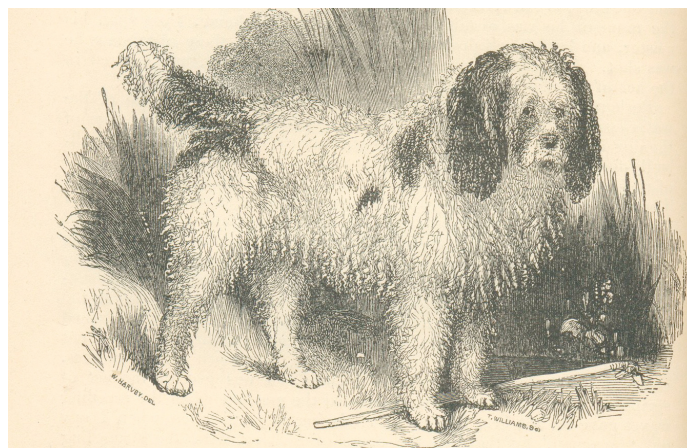
We will get a long-legged, elegant, rough-coated and sturdy pointing dog. Not looking like a Poodle, but showing its clever and sensible disposition.'

'Molly' and 'Tell'

At the end of the 1890s, von Zedlitz wasn't the only one trying to create his ideal gun dog. Eduard Karel Korthals (Griffon Korthals – Wirehaired Pointing Griffon) in Germany, Emmanuel Boulet (Griffon Boulet) in France, and Per Schiller (Schillerstövare) in Sweden, were doing exactly the same thing. Today, the Griffon Korthals and Schillerstövare still exist; only the Griffon Boulet is extinct.

Being a country gentleman, von Zedlitz should have had the means and men to create a new dog breed, but we have no records about his finances. We know, however, that he recruited a royal forester, Walter from Wolfsdorf, to realize the first crossing between a Pointer and a Poodle.

Von Zedlitz provided a black Poodle bitch named 'Molly'. The sire was a brown-and-white Pointer ('of sturdy type') named



The Poodle in William Youatt's 'The Dog', 1886.
The Poodle was chosen by von Zedlitz to create the Pudel pointer.

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Hans von Mulert and his Pudelpointer 'Harras Biebrich', born in 1892. The sire was a Pointer; the dam was 'Nelly', a Pudelpointer. Von Mulert was one of the founding fathers and honorary Chairman of the breed club.

'Tell', descended from the kennels of the Prince of Wales and owned by Prince Friedrich III (1831-1888), the future Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia. The first litter was born in 1881. Shortly after this crossing, the dogs were named 'Pudelpointers' or 'H e g e w a l d Raubärte' (Hegewald Moustaches). Under the affix vom Wolfsdorf, Molly and Tell produced among several others, 'Cora' (female) and 'Castro' (male). Von Zedlitz was pleased with the results; in 1894, he wrote, "In

Cora as well in her litter brother Castro, the intelligence of the Poodle and the will to retrieve and search, the obedience, the good nose, great stamina and the lovely temperament of the Pointer were united. These qualities came with their sober color - grey-brown, more grey than brown, all over the body, without a trace of spots - together with the desired short, harsh coat."

For a long time, Cora was the ideal for the breed.

Critics

More Pointer blood was used and the vom Wolfsdorf dogs entered the public eye. German dog writer Richard Strebel mentioned the Pudelpointer in his book *'Die Deutschen Hunde' (German Dogs, 1904-05)*: "Not a single other dog has been the reason for so many bitter rows than the wretched Pudelpointer." The author was infuriated by the breed's sudden appearance 'as usual in Germany'. He preferred 'the English way': development in silence and public appearance afterward.

Strebel wrote: "The idea of crossing the Pointer and the Poodle was a stillborn child because it did not bring something new. Crossing the Pointer and the Poodle was the same as 'carrying coals to Newcastle.'" The result was a dog resembling a German pointing dog - nothings else." (Strebel's book was published in parts in 1904-05, so von Zedlitz never saw the critical text.) Several other German dog writers wrote unfavorably about the Pudelpointer, but von Zedlitz remained convinced that a cross between a Pointer and a Poodle was the only road to an ideal German pointing dog. He ignored scorn and

criticism and remained an admirer of English pointer breeders. Like Korthals, von Zedlitz used his pen to expose abuses in the German pointing dog world.

'Breed the way you want to breed, but be successful.'

Hegewald

Useful Working Dog

The first working test for the Pudelpointers took place in 1892, in Sonnenwalde, close to Berlin. The test was organized by the 'Verein zur Prüfung von Gebrauchshunde zur Jagd' (Society for Testing Working Dogs in the Field), founded by von Zedlitz in 1891. He attended the working test and saw the breeder Walter testing two Pudelpointers: 'Tell', born in 1889 in the third generation, and 'Nelly', born in 1889 in the second generation. The working test lasted two days and resembled the present working tests for pointing dogs in Germany.

Tell and Nelly were entered as numbers six and seven in the *'Deutsche Gebrauchshunde Stammbuch' (German Studbook for Working Dogs)*.

Apart from the vom Wolfsdorf dogs, various bloodlines were developed between 1885 and 1895. There was growing awareness in the gundog world that the Pudelpointer, however new, was indeed a very useful working breed.

Von Zedlitz published several other books: *'Der Hühner Hund' (The Bird Dog)* and *'Dachs und Schweisshund' (Dachshund and Bloodhound)*. In 1911, his publisher Neumann-Neudam (the firm still exists as publisher of dog books and hunting books!) published a reprint of some articles, entitled *'Hegewalds Schriften über den Gebrauchshund' (Hegewald's Writings about the Working Gundog)*.

'An Extremely Fat Man'

Photos of Sigismund von Zedlitz are rare but still we know more or less how he looked like. I found a hilarious description written by an eye-witness who visited a dog show in Cologne in 1889. He noticed commotion and turmoil at the entrance and supposed it was caused by a fire. But then people started shouting 'Hegewald is coming! Hegewald is coming!' Von Zedlitz



Portrait of Sigismund Freiherr von Zedlitz-Neukirch (1838-1903) Creator of the Pudelpointer

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was escorted by members of the Show Committee and the eye-witness wrote: 'As I looked through a small hole in the crowd, I felt a paralysing disillusionment. In front of us a large and extremely fat man appeared. It was a man without a trace of being a hunter. He could have been a retired baker instead of an outdoor man. Because I don't belong to those people who only judge the outside, I told myself that the spirit of a great writer and dog fancier could live in a body that had become gigantic for a hunter.'

Twentieth-Century Growth

In 1897, a breed club was founded in Darmstadt ('Verein der Pudelpointer Züchter') and von Zedlitz became honorary president. Carl Rehfus, a well-known and respected gun dog trainer and better known under his pseudonym 'Oberländer', was vice-chairman. His book, published in 1891, is still a classic. Rehfus owned a Pudelpointer male, a son of 'Cora vom Wolfsdorf'.

According to the well-known Swiss dog writer Hans Räber, von Zedlitz used ninety Pointers: "the majority were German Pointing Dogs short-haired and rough-haired", and 7 Poodles. Räber continued: "How these Poodles looked like is not clear. Probably he used some French Barbets as well, because at that time the modern Poodle



*Von Zedlitz's ideal gun dog would have a good nose, great stamina, a rough coat of sober color and a good temperament.
(Photo courtesy of Roc Creek Kennels, U.S.A.)*

was hardly a working dog anymore."

The breed flourished and between 1894 and 1899, 120 dogs were entered in a breed register, which was eventually replaced by the breed's stud book. The dogs already listed in the register were entered in the stud book only if they had successfully passed a working test, thus emphasizing that the Pudelpointer was created for working purposes only.

Shortly after his second wife died (1902), Von Zedlitz passed away in 1903, at only 65 years old. He was buried at the 'Südfried-



*Pudelpointers and German Pointing Dogs
at a working test in 1897, not far from the city of Heidelberg.*

hof' (Southern Cemetery) in Halle (later Eastern Germany). The 'Verein Deutsch-Drahthaar' (German Wire-haired Club) took care of a memorial stone on his grave. According to the mayor of Halle (2009), the memorial stone and the grave do not exist anymore. They did not survive two World Wars. 44 years after the Second World War, when the Berlin Wall was demolished (1989), the German people living in Eastern Germany (DDR) and the Pudelpointers were reunited.

At the beginning of the 20th century, undesirable characteristics occasionally cropped up; for example, a woolly coat and a black or blended coat color.

The Second World War was a difficult time for the breed. To avoid much inbreeding, Pointers were used again. The last crossing was in 1983 when a male Pointer was mated to a Pudelpointer bitch. In 1934, there were approximately 500 Pudelpointers. By the 1970s, the breed's studbook had 37 volumes containing 11,263 names. At that time, the population in Germany was about 1,000 dogs. By 2000, there were about 180 Pudelpointer breeders in Germany and their dogs were being exported to several European countries, the U.S. and Canada.

The breed was introduced to North America in 1956 by Bodo Winterhelt. His kennel ('Winterhelles' in Oregon) was the foundation of the breed in North America. The Pudelpointer Club of North America (<http://www.pcna.org/>), founded in 1972, is the oldest recognized authority for the breed. Their goal is 'preserving the heritage and protecting the future of Pudelpointers for hunters'. Another organization is NAPPA, a breeders alliance 'made up of sincere Pudelpointer breeders requiring strict breeding regulations with the intent to protect and improve the quality of the Pudelpointer as a versatile breed in North America' (<http://www.pudelpointer.org/>).

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