

Excerpt from “The Borzoi” published by the Borzoi Club of America in 1973

The first Borzoi to come directly from Russia to the United States were imported by Seacroft kennels in 1890, at least seven dogs, from the kennels of the Grand Duke Peter Nicholas and Prince Boris Galitzin. A close friend of Mr. Hanks was Mr. Joseph B. Thomas who soon joined them in trying to further interest in this wonderful breed. It was Mr. Thomas who recognized that the Borzoi of the Imperial Kennels were somewhat weedy and did not have the individual stamina and strength which were so needed in the hunting field. Mr. Hanks also realized this and:

. . . after a few years stopped exhibiting his dogs and turned many of them over to his Kennel Manager, then Mr. Tom Turner. It was, however, very fortunate that Mr. Joseph B. Thomas stepped into the picture with great enthusiasm, and purchased what good dogs he could in America as well as taking from Mr. Turner many of the best Borzoi of Seacroft Kennels in order to form his O'Vallev Farm Kennels. With the hope of improving the strain, Mr. Thomas visited Canada and England in search of the high standard of Borzoi he hoped to find. The quality there was no better. In August of 1903 he visited the Imperial Kennels of the Czar at Gatchina, near the capital, and was most discouraged at what he found as there seemed to be no distinct type. Then, by accident, Mr. Thomas learned from the editor of a little sporting paper that Mr. Artem Boldaroff had an excellent kennel, and that His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Nicholas also had some hounds. Mr. Thomas writes:

Little did I realize at that time what my fortune was to be, for had I not seen either of these kennels, I should have been little the wiser for my trip. I sent telegraphic requests to visit them which brought favourable replies, in one case from Mr. Boldaroff himself, in the other from M. Dmitri Walzoff, who is 'chef du comptoir' to the Grand Duke.

The visit to both kennels was most hospitable and charming, and Mr. Thomas was

able to secure that outstanding specimen, Bistri of Perchina, from the Perchina Kennels of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolai-vitch, and three bitches, Sorva, Atamanka, and Raskida, from the Woronzova Kennels of M. and Mme. Boldaroff. Bistri and Raskida were to produce Ch. Rasboi O'Valley Farm who was to win Best of Breed at Westminster four years in succession.

Jumping ahead to the 1920's.... Another famous kennel of this era was the Romanoff Kennels of the United States which has been owned at various times by the following: Mrs. F. C. McAllister, Leroy Pelletier, Norman A. Pabst, and Louis J. Murr, one of our best remembered all-breed judges. Mr. Murr will be remembered as the breeder and exhibitor of Ch. Vigow of Romanoff; Vigow was unde-feated in breed competition, and his record includes 21 best-in-show awards. Vigow was destined to set a record as Best American Bred dog-all breeds in AKC member shows in both 1935 and 1936.

The name change from Russian Wolfhound to Borzoi came in late 1936, to conform with the name used for the breed in the rest of the world.