



# RAGDOLL CAT HISTORY

## 'THE FOUNDATIONS' AN ABBREVIATED HISTORY

by David Nudleman

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The Ragdoll is a breed of cat which was first bred and developed by Ann Baker of Riverside, California, in the 1960's. Ann Baker was a breeder of Persians at that time she began the Ragdoll Breed.

The birth of the Ragdoll Breed started with a non-pedigreed Angora-type female long-haired white cat called Josephine, whom Ann had said was owned by one of her neighbors. Josephine was a very prolific breeder and Anne became interested in some of the offspring of this cat. Josephine would later become the founding queen of the Ragdoll breed.

Josephine produced frequent litters of kittens which were all fairly wild in nature until at some stage she was severely injured by a car.

After her recovery, the kittens she produced appeared to be quite different in temperament, in that they seemed to crave human attention and were very playful, loving and relaxed.

This trait aroused Ann's interest and she started to acquire some of Josephine's kittens. The first of these was a black solid female described as being similar to a Burmese but it was thick-furred. One day Ann noticed that one of the offspring had the appearance of the Sacred Cat of Burma (the Birman Breed). She kept him and named him Raggedy Ann Daddy Warbucks.

Daddy Warbucks was used to help her create and establish her Ragdoll breeding program. The offspring produced from a mating back to Josephine resulted in pointed kittens. Apparently, Josephine must have had the recessive pointed gene, in order for her to produce pointed kittens. The kittens seemed to have inherited the temperament of the Birman-like marked father and Ann was very drawn their exceptionally docile nature.



**Josephine and kittens in the summer of 1965.**

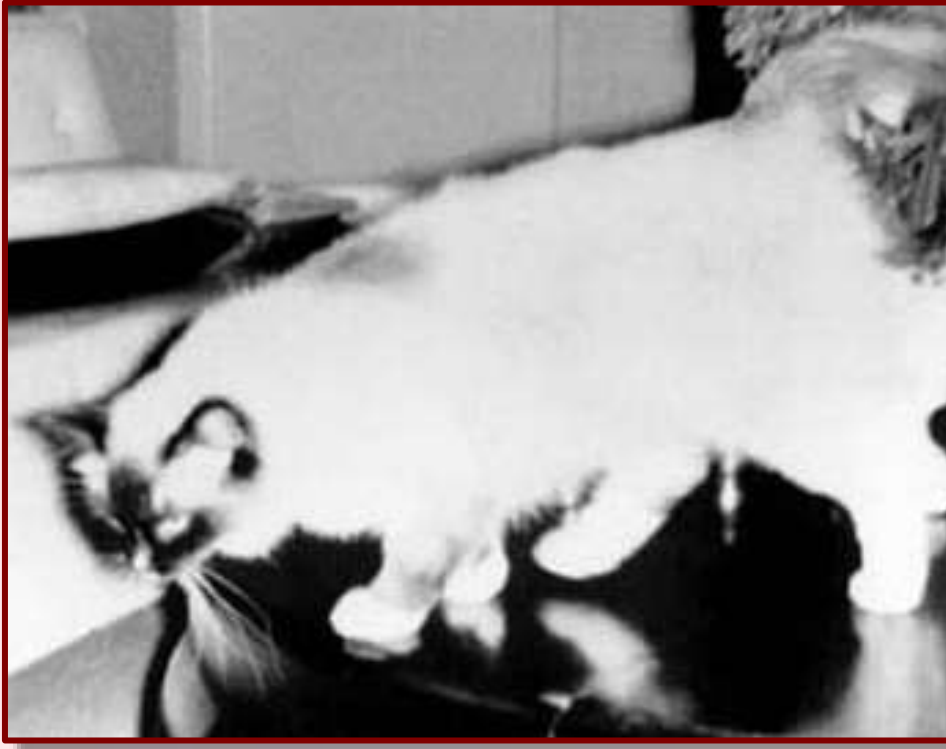
By the time Ann Baker realized she had created a new breed of cat, she decided to market them as Ragdolls. She also created her own organization called the IRCA (the International Ragdoll Cat Association), in order, to provide breeders a way of being able to register their Ragdolls. This organization existed until recently, but its modern-day purpose was to produce Ragdoll cat shows, providing Ragdolls an opportunity to compete in the show ring.

Once she was confident that the Ragdoll breed was set, she sent ragdoll cats to other breeders to help her continue to develop the breed. However, she realized she still needed to exercise control over the progression of the breed, so she set up franchises starting in 1970, to create a controlled breeding program that she would direct.

However, the contracts were strict and costly, which caused stress for the contracted breeders. By 1976 these contracts were eventually cancelled, and the Ragdoll Breed began to flourish and continued to be widely developed within the catteries of many new Ragdoll Breeders.

Luckily Denny and Laura Dayton from (Blossom Time Cattery) had acquired the Ragdoll breed prior to the franchise contracts, and they were therefore free to develop the breed on their own.

From the Dayton's and other early breeders, the Ragdoll developed into three patterned cats. The colorpoint, the mitted and the bi-color.



**Raggedy Ann Daddy Warbucks, a foundation male of the modern-day Ragdoll breed.**

An interesting note is that Ann Baker felt that the bi-color pattern was the less favourable one and cheaper, the mitted pattern was the middle level value pattern, and the colorpoint pattern was the most desirable and most valuable pattern. This is now totally opposite of today's Ragdoll breeder societies.

Through the 1980's and on, the Ragdoll cat was imported to all locations around the world. World-wide, breeders developed their lines as close to the original standards as possible but over time, cattery lines were created that were distinct for those countries. All had the correct large, modified wedge with rounder contours, medium rounded ears, medium muzzle, oval blue eyes, semi non matting fur and substantial bodies.

Each cattery or region had its distinct facial features and size too. Some countries stopped imports over time and the genetic lines became close, causing recessive traits to show up more often. Once this occurred, they sought out additional breeding stock using very long quarantine programs prior to allowing them into their country. Thankfully the reintroduction of new genetic lines improved the well-being of the cats produced in these cattery lines.

Since the late 90's the bi-color pattern was favoured and most valued by the Ragdoll breeders and were shown more often, than not. They were the only pattern accepted in CFA (Cat Fanciers' Association) until early 2010's when the mitted and colorpoint patterns were also accepted.

TICA (The International Cat Association) has accepted all these patterns for decades.



**Mrs. Ann Baker with Raggedy-Ann Fugianna.**

During the early 2000's the bi-color Ragdoll cat pattern flashiness usually won in the show rings so the breeders began to breed the bi-color pattern exclusively. Unfortunately, the white spotting factor took over and many bi-color

Many Ragdolls had too much white in the pattern. Additionally, they became severely mismarked, or they looked like the van pattern (20% color 80% white). This caused an issue, so they had to add colorpoints and mitteds to their programs to control the white spotting gene and to bring back the correct pattern and color proportions

Even though mitted and colorpoint patterns were largely ignored, and not presented in the show rings, the ragdoll breeders realized that they needed these patterns to control the white spotting factor. Finally, more people began to own, breed, and show these patterns. I personally think and a blue or seal colorpoint is exquisite.

This bi-color to bi-color breeding practice has occurred on numerous occasions including in the last decade as more and more new Ragdoll Breeders make the same breeding decision. Once they began to see the pattern faults, they sought out the mitted and colorpoint pattern cats to help re-establish the correct patterns.

In the last decade there has begun a trend for creating smaller round ears, rounder heads, semi cobby bodies, rounder and bigger eyes and shorter legs in Ragdolls.

These are not true "Ragdolls" that conform to the accepted breed standards, but a marketing program to sell this version to a select clientele that will pay big money for this type of pointed cat. Unfortunately, these trends tend to confuse people's ideas of what a standard Ragdoll should look like.



**The Dayton's with Floppy, Phil and Loveable.**

Breeding Ragdoll cats has been a wonderful experience for me for the last 20 years. I have developed my lines towards the Ragdoll standard and my cats reflect this. They are substantially boned cats with the bluest eyes and the most docile dispositions. They have rabbit soft semi-long non-matting fur and come in many of the pointed colors and patterns. They love their owners and enjoy being pampered.

There is nothing like having a 15–18 pound Ragdoll cat lay on your chest, stare into your eyes and purr very loudly while your pet them and hug them. I am very proud of the breeding history of my cattery Brightstone Ragdolls and I look towards the future with a smile on my face.

David Nudleman



David Nudleman is a long-time breeder of Ragdoll cats and an Approved All Breed Judge with The International Cat Association. (TICA) You can visit his site at [www.brightstonerags.com](http://www.brightstonerags.com)

**References:**

The Definitive Guide to Ragdolls Authors Lorna Wallace, Robin Pickering, David Pollard 1995.

Left: Brightstone Azuzie Delamer – Blue Lynx Mitted Ragdoll



**BRIGHTSTONE MAXINE NIGHTINGALE**  
**Seal Tortie Lynx Point & White Ragdoll female.**  
**Bred, owned, and photographed by David Nudleman.**