

Olivia Burn's first Basenji Imports

by James E. Johannes

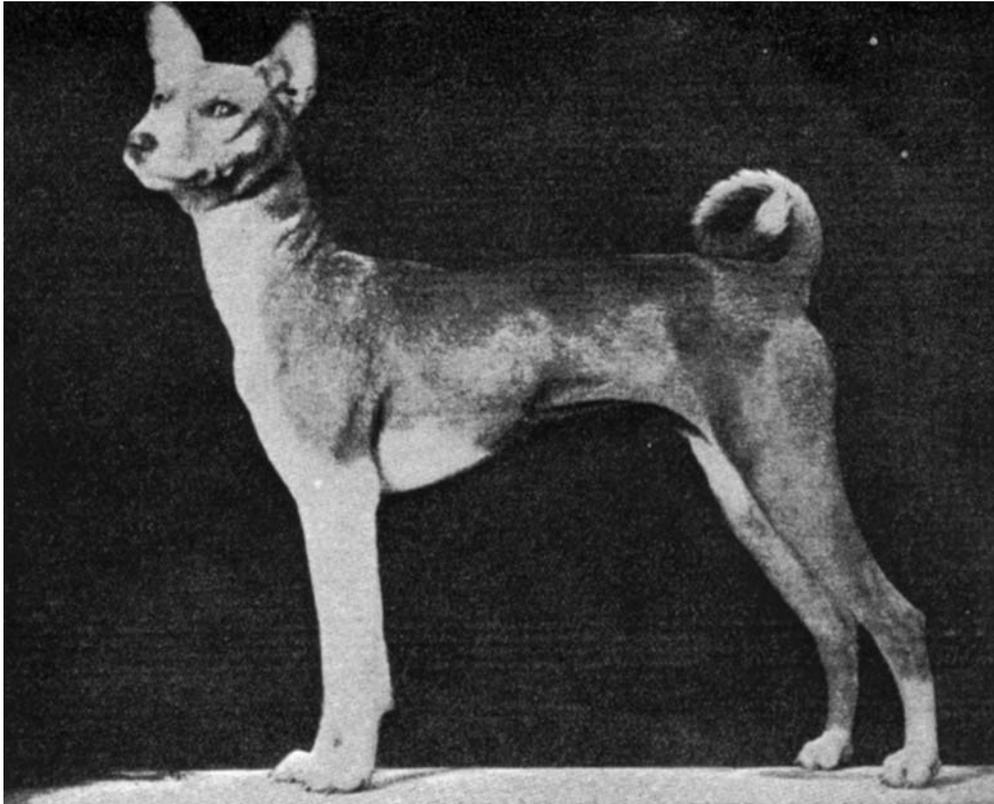
During Mrs. Burn's first trip, in 1929, to the Belgian Congo to visit her husband she fell in love with the native hunting dog and kept several as pets in the bungalow. In 1930, Mrs. Burn returned to England bringing with her five chestnut Basenjjs.

They were placed in quarantine. Mrs. Burn feared that being non-European dogs, perhaps without natural immunity, they needed to be inoculated against distemper. At the time, the Ministry of Agriculture prohibited the use of live vaccine; only dead vaccine could be used. This vaccine conferred protection for only six months.

Within eleven days after inoculation, first one, then two more eleven days after the first, and finally a fourth all came down with a virulent form of distemper. The fifth, pictured in the Nov 1933 and May 1935 *Field*, was given Major Dunkin's protective serum and she did not contract distemper.

For three years, she was a much-loved pet. In the spring of 1933, Mrs. Burn returned from the Congo with a mate for her. Mrs. Burn had managed to persuade a chief of the Feshis to part with a male dog-named Kiluba. After coming out of quarantine in November of 1933, he was mated with her. Unfortunately, she died three weeks later from septicemia caused by an internal tear that occurred during the mating.

Mrs. Burn returned to the Congo and in 1936 brought out a dog, Bongo, and two bitches, Bokoto and Bereke. These three became the founders of the breed. While she was in the Congo, Kiluba had been left at a boarding kennel. When Mrs. Burn came back from the Congo he did not seem to be feeling well and soon died. A post-mortem revealed an ulcer, which was possibly caused by a fish-bone.



Mrs. Burn's Basenji Bitch, originally imported from the Belgian Congo in 1930
(*The Field* – May 18, 1935)

Olivia, B. 1933. The "Field" Distemper Vaccine. *The Field* no. 4029 (Nov. 4): 1157.

Olivia, B. 1935. The Dog of Ancient Egypt? *The Field* no. 4048 (May 18): 1251.

Tudor-Williams, V. 1954. *Basenjjs: The Barkless Dogs*. London: Watmoughs Ltd. 79 pp.