

## History of the Australian Shepherd. “the little blue dog”

Australian Shepherds origin is somewhat debated. There is no sure answer that they originated here or there. They are believed to have come from a mixed gene pool of several different herding breeds including the Border Collie, English Shepherd, and Australian Koolie some time in the 1800's.

They were originally used for herding sheep during the gold rush in the 1840s. In those days, Aussies were not as large as our standard Australian Shepherds of today. It wasn't until cattle replaced sheep that the Australian Shepherd was bred up in size to what we now recognize as the standard size.

In 1962 Sandy Travis entered breeding Aussies; buying her first dog from Torrance Rodeo, this puppy matured to 11 inches. She purchased a small male to breed to this female and the litter varied from 9-13 inches. These lines were bred within themselves, thus reinforcing the small size. Meanwhile, in 1968 a woman by the name Doris Cordova set out to breed the Australian Shepherd down to a portable, easy to travel with size. It was in 1978 That Sandy's and Doris' lines met. One of Cordova's most well known dogs Cordova's Spike was sold to Doris by Sandy. Cordova's Spike was Registered with NSDR, later becoming the very first miniature Australian Shepherd to be registered as miniature was added later. Cordova's Spike was 13 inches, which today is considered toy sized.

Cordova's Spike was sold to Bill and Sally Kennedy of B/S Kennels, where they continued to develop and shape the miniature Aussies. With the help of Sandy Travis, Doris Cordova, Bill and Sandy Kennedy, and later Chas Lasater of Valhalla Kennels the miniature Australian Shepherd was defined.

They became popular in the United States for their talents with herding sheep and cattle. And were bred for their intelligence, energy, and herding/guardian instincts we relate to the breed today. MASCUSA (Miniature Australian Shepherd Club of the USA) was formed in 1990. ASCA (Australian Shepherd Club of America) would allow those Aussies registered as Australian Shepherds to show, as there was no height disqualification. If they were registered as miniature, their papers were revoked. A similar story to that of the Miniature American Shepherds today. In part because MASCUSA was the parent club the AKC's Miniature American Shepherd.

AKC did not officially recognize the Australian Shepherd as a breed until 1993. And in July of 2015 The miniature American Shepherd was recognized by AKC.

### Sources:

Hartnagle, E. and Hartnagle-Taylor, J. (2007). *Vanished Trials and Faded Memories of Australian Shepherd History*. [online] American Kennel Club. Available at: <https://www.akc.org/sports/herding/articles/aussie-history/> [Accessed 8 Dec. 2018].

Travis, Sandy (n.d). [letter]