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Chapter **1**

The Lowdown on Siberian Huskies, Just the Basics

Congratulations! You're leaning toward welcoming a Siberian Husky into your home, or perhaps you've already made that decision and Smoky is already a part of your family. No matter, this chapter gives you a brief overview to this book and serves as your jumping-off point to the world of Siberian Huskies.

Knowing What to Look for: A Husky's Breed Standard

Figuring out what a Husky is (and isn't) can sometimes be confusing, especially with all the lookalikes out there (like Alaskan Malamutes, Samoyeds, Alaskan Klee Kai, Northern Inuits, wolves, and wolf-hybrids, among others). To know that you're looking at a Siberian Husky, pay close attention to the following standards:

- » Size
- » Body

- » Front and back views
- » Neck
- » Skull
- » Teeth
- » Expression
- » Eyes
- » Ears
- » Feet
- » Tail
- » Coat texture
- » Color
- » Nose
- » Gait
- » Temperament

Chapter 2 discusses these standards in greater detail to help you identify a true Siberian Husky.

HUSKIES STARTED WITH THE CHUKCHIS

The *Chukchis* are a semi-nomadic, reindeer-hunting people of northeastern Siberia. Today, the Chukchi population totals about 16,000; there is evidence that, in the past, the population was greater. Both the climatic and political oppression they have endured over the centuries have given the Chukchis the nickname “Apaches of the North.” Of course, they don’t call *themselves* that. They call themselves the *Luoravetlan*, which means “the genuine people.”

The word *Siberia* is almost synonymous with “cold,” but the earliest Chukchis probably enjoyed a milder climate than they do today. In those warmer times, they apparently relied on dogs primarily for help in hunting the plentiful reindeer. About 3,000 years ago, however, the climate changed drastically for the worse. The reindeer had to travel farther and farther to find food, and the deer-dependent Chukchis had to travel with them, taking their entire households along.

It was in this way that the Siberian dogs added sled hauling to their list of accomplishments. These animals were so highly prized that only very young, very old, and very sick

Chukchis were allowed to ride in the sleds as passengers. The sleds were mostly used for hauling goods; the people walked. Sometimes the Chukchi women and children pulled the sleds also — right along with the dogs.

The Chukchis gave birth to a rich culture. They developed an elaborate religion and conceived of a heaven whose gates were guarded by a pair of their Chukchi dogs. Furthermore, they believed that anyone who mistreated a dog wouldn't be allowed into Chukchi heaven.

Because the Chukchis used reindeer to pull the heaviest loads, they placed a premium on developing their dogs for speed, endurance, and agility. It paid off. No other breed in the world can haul a light load as fast and far as the Siberian Husky — and on so little food.

The Russians are coming!

The Chukchis were always a thorn in the side of the Russians. They declined to surrender during the 1700s when the Russians had conquered every other Siberian people in their effort to control the fur trade. They'd just pack up their things and move farther on, making the Russians chase them some more. Sometimes, the Chukchis moved their entire settlement onto an iceberg and floated away. Finally, a Russian general named Pavlutskiy decided he could handle the Chukchis. In an incredibly stupid move, Pavlutskiy plowed into a narrow ravine to finish them off. The Chukchis were just sitting there in ambush, not daring to hope that the general could possibly be dumb enough to trap himself. But he was. The Chukchis then killed the Russians, including Pavlutskiy, and confiscated their guns. Because they had no idea how to use their newfound weapons, they captured some disaffected Russian serfs, who gladly passed along their firearms lore. The serfs didn't like the Russian army or the Cossacks any better than the Chukchis did. By this time, the Russians decided that it would be smarter all around just to leave the Chukchis alone.

The Communists versus the Huskies

In the 1930s, the Communists tried to destroy every vestige of traditional, non-Soviet culture, including the native dog breeds. They decided sled dogs were outdated and should be replaced by motorized vehicles. At least that's what they thought until they got to Chukchi land and found that all their up-to-date motorized vehicles got stuck in the snow.

In 1947, the Soviet Congress, which apparently had nothing better to do, decided that the Workers' Paradise really didn't need any sled dogs or reindeer-herding dogs, and they reclassified the hunting dogs into four new subdivisions, none of which corresponded to any real breed. The Husky was left out of these classifications; the Soviets, in their infinite wisdom, decided that they were too small to pull anything, even though they had been hauling sleds all over Siberia for the past few thousand years or so.

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The Siberians were indeed much smaller than the other Arctic breeds, topping out at around 50 pounds, which is why the Russians sneered at them. But the Chukchis knew that nothing could surpass their dogs for long-distance sledding. When the Chukchis needed more power, they simply hitched up more dogs. And because of the Siberian's excellent temperament, as many as 18 or 20 dogs could be hitched to a single sled. And there was no fighting.

Besides, Siberian Huskies had other advantages. Because they had been raised in a family setting and not left out to fend for themselves, they could be trusted with children, and they could run faster, longer, and on less food than any other breed in the world.

Understanding Why Huskies Make Great Pets

Siberian Huskies are great dogs. They're devoted to their owners and can be a great companion. However, Huskies do require attention because they're full of energy. That means if you're seriously considering buying or adopting a Husky, be prepared that he'll need lots of physical exercise, loving attention, and stability. Owning a dog, especially one with the relentless energy of a Siberian, is something you shouldn't underestimate.

That being said, consider these factors when bringing a new Husky home:

- » **Children:** Most Huskies are good with children, although not every Husky is, but the good thing is Huskies are playful and can adapt as long as your children treat your Husky well.
- » **Cost:** Owning any kind of dog can be costly, after you consider medical care, high-quality food, grooming, supplies, toys, training classes, and so on.
- » **Your house:** If you prefer a meticulously clean home, a Husky may not be your best bet. They can shed, and if they don't get enough exercise, they can focus their attention on things you don't want them to, like your couch pillows or legs to your coffee table.



REMEMBER

Having a large fenced backyard is ideal because a Husky needs plenty of space to exercise. If you don't have a fenced yard, be prepared to take your Husky on a daily walk.

- » **Climate:** Huskies prefer cooler climates because of their thick coats, and they're extra susceptible to heat exhaustion.
- » **Time and exercise:** Huskies are balls of energy and require a lot of attention and exercise.
- » **Other pets:** Siberians usually get along well with other dogs, but be mindful of other pets, including cats, unless the Siberian has been around the cat since puppyhood.

I provide more in-depth specifics about these points and others in Chapter 3.

Picking a Husky: Where to Go and Where to Avoid

When you're looking for a Husky, you have a few options, some options are much better than the other ones, ranging from shelters to breeders.



WARNING

I can't emphasize enough. Don't buy your Husky at a pet store because pet stores often work with puppy mills — dogs are treated poorly. Your chances of getting a sick dog increase exponentially, which means higher vet bills too.

Here are the best places to get a Husky for your family:

- » **Breeders:** For a genetically sound, good-tempered, and healthy Siberian puppy, a breeder is by far your best bet. Breeders take special care in ensuring their dogs are healthy. Many breeders show dogs and participate in dog sports. However, they often sell their puppies that aren't suited for showing or sports, which makes for great pets for you.
- » **Shelters and rescue organizations:** If you want an older Husky that was given up by its previous owners, shelters and rescue organizations are great. Their dogs are often loving and loveable and just need a good home.



TIP

Just ask your local shelter or rescue organization about the Huskies they have up for adoption. They often let you visit and spend some time with the dog to see if you and the dog mesh well. Adopting and acclimating an older dog is often less time-consuming task than getting a puppy.

Chapter 3 explains in greater detail about these options and how you can find your new family member.

OLAF SWENSON SAVES THE DAY

Sadly, there may be no pure Siberian Huskies left in the land of their birth. They disappeared during the Stalinist purges (along with most of the Chukchis and a few million dissident Russians). Happily, some Huskies were exported to North America first; the last of them made the trip in 1929. Arctic explorer and fur trader Olaf Swenson had purchased some at the then exorbitant price of \$150. Swenson had cultivated friendly relationships with the Chukchis for many years. Indeed, he was the only outsider ever willingly allowed into Chukchi territory.

Swenson admired both the friendly temperament of the Siberians and the gentle treatment the dogs received from their Chukchi families. He understood that the two factors were related. Many of the other northern breeds received nothing but brutal treatment at the hands of their owners, and in time became brutal themselves.

There was one dog in particular Swenson coveted. He spent two years trying to buy a certain Billkoff (Snowball). He was always rebuffed, no matter how much he offered. Once though he went out of his way to perform a small favor for the Chukchi. Swenson didn't see his friend for a year, but when he visited him again, his Chukchi friend seemed glad to see him. Going over to Billkoff, he took the dog by the collar and led him over to Swenson. Then he placed his hand on the dog's head. "Your dog," he said solemnly. The man refused to take a penny for him.

Billkoff proved to be the finest lead dog Swenson ever owned. Even the most recalcitrant dogs on the team would follow his lead. This was a critical advantage. From the team's point of view, the lead dog may be even more important than the driver. After all, the driver has no reins to guide the team — they're following the lead dog.

Knowing that the unique Siberian Husky was in danger of disappearing forever, Swenson had some of the finest Chukchi dogs shipped to America. Some went to Maine; others were shipped to Quebec. Still others were bred to the dogs of the legendary Leonhard Seppala (see the later sidebar for more about Seppala).

Introducing Your Husky to His New Home

Helping your new Husky adapt and settle into your home can be daunting. After all, everything is new and strange to him. The experience can be enjoyable and help you bond with your new family member. Chapter 5 discusses everything from feeding him his first meal to reassuring him on his first night in your home. If your new Husky isn't potty trained, you'll also want to start housetraining as soon as possible.



TIP

Before you bring home your new Husky or soon thereafter, make sure you make an appointment with your veterinarian for a complete checkup.

The following sections touch on a few other important areas to remember as you bring a Husky home.

Ensuring you have the right supplies

When you bring your new Husky home, you want to make sure you properly outfit him to make his and your life more comfortable. Here are some important supplies you need:

- » **Collar:** A collar that fits is important because you attach the ID tag to it and the leash for walks.
- » **Leash:** A sturdy leash, also called a *lead*, allows you to go on walks and keep your Husky out of harm's way.
- » **Harness:** You may prefer a harness to a collar. A harness fits around your dog's chest and torso rather than his neck.
- » **ID tag:** Huskies like to make a run for it, so having their name and your contact information on the ID tag is imperative.
- » **Food and water bowls:** You want to feed and water your Husky in style, and the best option is stainless steel or chrome.
- » **Bed:** A wide variety of types of beds are available. Just make sure it's machine washable to get rid of Husky hair and any odors.
- » **Crate:** Even if you don't plan on your Husky sleeping in a crate, having one is so important because more than likely your Husky will like to get away from everything in the crate. A wide assortment are available.
- » **Toys:** Toys are great ways to keep your Husky entertained. Use different types of toys to stimulate him so he doesn't get bored. Getting him a combination chew and toy is my top recommendation.

I talk about these supplies and more in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Listening to your Husky

Your Husky will communicate with you with both verbal and nonverbal ways. Being able to understand what he's saying or experiencing can help build the bond between the two of you and even alleviate any potential issues. These sections give you an overview of the ways your Husky may communicate with you.

Verbal: Hey, listen to me

Dogs communicate verbally for an assortment of reasons. Here is an overview to them (Chapter 6 provides more in-depth explanations):

- » **Barking:** The good news is that Huskies bark less than other breeds. They may occasionally bark to mark territory.
- » **Howling:** A howl is long and drawn-out may mean your Husky is communicating with his pack or other Huskies, warning intruders, or expressing pain or sorrow.
- » **Whining:** Your Husky probably wants something from you, like to be let in, go out, or petted.
- » **Growling:** If he growls, he's more than likely warning whoever he's growling at.
- » **Yelping:** Your Husky is in pain if he yelps.

Nonverbal: Pay attention to me

A Husky can also communicate to you through his body language. Here are some common behaviors to watch for and a brief explanation on each (I provide more details in Chapter 6):

- » **Circling and sniffing:** Dogs exhibit this behavior when greeting other dogs.
- » **Mounting:** Mounting is a sign of dominance where your Husky is trying to show who's the leader of the pack.
- » **Pawing:** Sometimes pawing is a sign of dominance. Other times he may be trying to get your attention.
- » **Bowing:** A Husky that bows is usually exhibiting play-soliciting behavior.
- » **Belly-rubbing response:** Who doesn't like a good belly rub? Your Husky is no different.
- » **Licking or tail-chewing:** These behaviors can indicate a wide variety of things, including a nervous habit, the need to eliminate, or fleas. Inspect your Husky to see if you can figure out what's causing this behavior.

Helping your Husky make new friends

You can socialize your Husky so he's comfortable being around other dogs and other people in these suggestions:

- » **Introduce him to all sorts of people during your daily walk.** As you walk around the neighborhood, have your Husky puppy meet different types of people — children, elderly people, people with canes, people riding bikes, and so on — to help him get accustomed.
- » **Enroll him in puppy kindergarten.** A class is a great way for him to learn some new commands, obedience, and even housetraining.
- » **Familiarize your Husky to children.** Make sure to introduce your Husky to children of all ages from infants and toddlers to tweens. Just keep a close eye on your Husky around little ones who may not know how to treat a dog.
- » **Let him be around other dogs and animals.** Familiarity breeds not contempt but contentment.



REMEMBER

Socializing an unsocialized dog after he's 18 months old is next to impossible, so let him be around other people and animals. Chapter 7 discusses some ways you can socialize your Husky.

Incorporating some discipline and training

Providing some discipline and basic training can make all the difference when living with a Husky. Before you teach him some commands, make sure you figure out what your training goals are, which includes training your family to be consistent.

Some basic commands to use with your Husky are as follows:

- » **Watch Me:** This command gets your Husky's attention to watch you as you teach him commands.
- » **Come:** This command is usually difficult for dogs to master, but it's important.
- » **Sit:** The Sit command is one of the easiest to master.
- » **Stay:** This command differs from the Sit command if you want to teach your dog some patience.
- » **Leave or Get Out:** You can use this command when you want your dogs out of your hair, like when you're cooking dinner and want them out of the kitchen.
- » **Heel:** A dog that heels during a walk is so much more pleasant than one that doesn't.

Chapter 8 delves deeper into these commands and more and explains how you can teach them.

Keeping an eye open for behavior issues

Your Husky can exhibit certain behaviors that can indicate a bigger problem that you need to address. Here are a few issues to watch out for:

» **The anxious Husky:** Huskies can demonstrate signs of separation anxiety for a wide array of reasons, including when you leave him home alone and when a family member dies or goes to college. You can deal with the anxiety in a number of ways, such as desensitizing yourself and your dog or medicating your dog, depending on the severity of the anxiety.

THE INFLUENCE OF LEONHARD SEPPALA

The greatest name in Siberian history has to be that of the Norwegian Leonhard Seppala. Seppala, who had been born in the fishing village of Skyjaevoy, 250 miles inside the Arctic Circle, was no stranger to bitter weather. He kind of liked it, actually. When he emigrated to the United States in 1914, he naturally chose Alaska for his new home. He began by working in the goldfields and driving freight dogs, but soon he, too, got bitten by the racing bug.

To begin his new hobby, Seppala bought some young racing Huskies from a certain Jafet Lindeberg. Lindeberg had originally intended to sell the dogs to the famous Norwegian adventurer Roald Amundsen for an attempt to reach the South Pole, but Amundsen had to abandon the try when World War I broke out. So, Seppala got to run his new team in the 1914 All Alaska Sweepstakes Race (refer to Chapter 15 for more information), but he was badly defeated. He got lost in a whiteout blizzard and came within a few feet of a 200 foot precipice. Only the immediate responsiveness of his native Siberian lead dog, Suggen, prevented complete tragedy. Undeterred by his scary experience, Seppala simply made plans to try again the following year.

Seppala went on to a brilliant racing career with his Huskies, winning the All-Alaska Sweepstakes in 1915, 1916, and 1917. (The races had to be halted when the United States entered World War I.) Seppala won races not just in Alaska, however, but also in New England and all over the east coast of the United States. Seppala proved the Husky's ability to race at all distances — not just the marathons. Today, Huskies excel at so-called *middle distance racing*, 30 to 60 miles. Well, it's middle distance for them, if not for us.

Seppala won so often that he was accused of being a superman, and of hypnotizing his opponents. Yet never, in all his years of racing, did Seppala ever strike his team. Only once did he even crack his whip — and that was in order to get the dogs up quickly after a short rest. Today, it's against the rules for mushers to even carry whips in sanctioned sled dog races.

- » **The fraidy cat (to thunder):** Eliminating a fear to thunder is impossible, but you can desensitize your Husky in a number of ways, including creating a calm environment, hugging your dog and speaking gently to him, using supplements, or even medicating him.
- » **The digger:** Huskies love to dig. You can't completely control digging, but you can watch out for circumstances where your Husky demonstrates this behavior by diverting his attention, playing with him, and loving on him. You can also make sure he has enough exercise.
- » **The chewer:** Huskies also like to chew, especially when they're puppies. When you see your Husky chew something, replace the item with something more suitable to chew. Make sure you've exercised your Husky.
- » **The escape artist:** Huskies are notable for escaping — from your yard or the house — and retrieving them is extremely difficult. To keep him in, make sure your fence is secure and at least 6 feet tall, although 8 feet is better.

Chapter 9 discusses these problems and others in greater detail and gives you advice on how to deal with them.

Caring for Your Husky

When you welcome a Husky into your home, you want to provide proper care and some TLC. You may be a little overwhelmed at all the choices. After all, which food is best? What about vaccines? What if your Husky is choking on something? So many questions! Don't worry. The following sections give you a brief overview to get you started. Part 4 is chock-full of advice and guidance in plain English so you can keep going.

Making sure your Husky has proper nutrition

Feeding your Husky food packed with nutrition and taste is one of the most important things you can do. Reading the labels so you know what you're giving your Husky is a start. Some of the types of food you can consider giving your dog are

- » **Dry:** Often called *kibble*, it's the most convenient type of food.
- » **Canned:** Canned foods are much more expensive than dry food; you can mix canned with dry for taste.

» **People food:** Fresh veggies and fruit, lean meat, and yogurt are okay. Stay clear of dairy products (milk can give your dog diarrhea) and processed meat. At all costs, avoid raw eggs, onions, chocolate, grapes and raisins, macadamia nuts, sugar-free gum and candy, and yeast, which can be deadly.



WARNING

Avoid semi-moist food. It's high in sugar and promotes obesity and tooth decay.

Chapter 11 explains dog nutrition and the different types of food that are best for your Husky.

Giving your Siberian a spa treatment

Good grooming is so much more than cosmetic. It also promotes health and happiness and a chance for you and dog to bond. Here are some important grooming to do with your Husky:

- » **Brushing and combing:** Huskies have a double coat of hair that needs attention. Give your Husky a thorough brush at least once a week and lighter brushing and combing several times a week.
- » **Bathing:** A Husky's skin is non-oily, so your dog doesn't need a lot of baths. When you do bathe him, use a mild, unmedicated shampoo for double-coated dogs and make sure you rinse thoroughly.
- » **Trimming nails:** Stay on top of this task and do it weekly.
- » **Brushing teeth:** Use a toothpaste designed for dogs and brush regularly to avoid plaque buildup.

Chapter 12 discusses these grooming tasks and more in greater detail. You may want to turn to a professional groomer for help with some of the more complex grooming, so I give suggestions on finding the right groomer for you and your Husky.

Ensuring your Husky is healthy

Making sure your Husky is healthy and happy is up to you. The best way to do so is regularly visit your vet who will check your dog's health. Your vet will discuss giving your Husky an assortment of vaccines, including the following:

- » **Canine parvovirus:** Commonly called *parvo*, this viral infection is highly contagious. Puppies should be completely immunized between 16 and 18 weeks of age.
- » **Distemper:** Still the primary killer of dogs worldwide, distemper attacks the dog's nervous system. Puppies should be completely immunized between 12 and 14 weeks of age.
- » **Hepatitis:** Similar to distemper, canine hepatitis is dangerous. Puppies should be immunized at 12 weeks.
- » **Rabies:** This virus is 100 percent fatal to dogs and humans. Puppies should be immunized between 16 and 24 weeks of age.
- » **Kennel cough:** This acute respiratory condition is often found in dogs that live in close quarters like kennels and shelters, hence the name. Puppies should be immunized at 16 weeks.

Your vet will also treat to avoid heartworm, fleas and ticks, and other conditions. Chapter 13 examines in greater details the different types of conditions your vet will treat.

Noting any changes in your Husky's health

Make sure you have a firm understanding of what a healthy Husky looks like so you know when your dog needs veterinarian help. Here are the important vital signs to keep an eye on:

- » **Rectal temperature:** It should be between 100 and 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- » **Gum color:** The color of his gums indicates blood perfusion and oxygenation. They should normally be pink.
- » **Capillary refill time:** This indicates your dog's circulatory health.
- » **Heart rate:** A Husky's heart rate is usually about 60 beats per minute. (The bigger the dog, the slower the heart.)
- » **Respiratory rate:** A normal dog breathes 10 to 30 times a minute, but heavily panting dogs can breathe 200 pants per minute.

Chapter 14 explains more about what to look for and what to do if you encounter any emergencies.

THE GREAT SERUM RUN: MISSION OF MERCY

Leonhard Seppala's greatest feat occurred in January 1925. A raging diphtheria epidemic had overtaken Nome, and two Eskimo children had already died. The fear was that the native population, who had little exposure to the disease, could be wiped out. The city's cache of serum had been used up, and the nearest supply was in Anchorage — almost 1,000 miles away. Although three unqualified pilots gamely volunteered to fly some rickety planes to Anchorage and thence to Nome, the 80 mph winds and raging blizzards made it impossible.

Only Huskies could save the day. A serum package was relayed from Nenana to Nome. Under the leadership of Seppala, 20 expert drivers and more than 100 dogs were recruited for the grueling trip. To make things even more difficult, the mushers had to stop periodically to warm the serum; nobody knew if it would still work if frozen. (Reindeer skin, quilt, and canvas were used for insulating the serum containers.)

The dogs ran 658 miles in five and half days through blizzards and waist deep snowdrifts. It was snowing so hard that the drivers couldn't see the dogs in front of them. The temperature plunged to 62 degrees below zero. Two dogs froze to death in harness; their musher, Charlie Evans, took their place and, along with the surviving dogs, pulled the sled himself the remaining miles of his run. Seppala himself drove 340 of those miles. His 12-year-old lead dog was the great Togo. At first, Togo seemed an unpromising specimen; he ran away from home, bit the other dogs, and allowed no one but Constance Seppala (Leonhard's wife) to handle him. Gradually, however, he came around, and to everyone's surprise, became one of the greatest racing dogs in history.

Togo wasn't much to look at, but he could lead a team like no other dog. Fittingly, the great Serum Run was his last appearance. Aging and injured on the trip, the old hero was permanently retired afterward. He died in Poland Spring, Maine, in 1929, at the age of 14 or 15. Togo's stuffed remains took on a peripatetic life of their own. For a while they were stored at Harvard's Peabody Museum; then they were sent to the Shelbourne Museum in Vermont, and finally they were transferred to the Iditarod Headquarters in Wasilla, Alaska, where you may go look at them yourself.

The final leg of the serum relay, however, was run not by Seppala and Togo, but by Gunnar Kasaan, who reached Nome on Groundhog Day. Kasaan was driving Seppala's second string of dogs, using a dog named Balto as the lead. In Seppala's opinion, Balto was a second-rate dog. For once, Seppala was wrong.

Balto, who had suffered bad press as "just a freight dog," surpassed himself. When Kasaan became lost on the ice of the Topkok River, Balto scented out the right trail (in 50 mph winds) and brought the team in safely. If it had been left to Kasaan, the entire team would have plunged through the ice.

Kasaan staggered into Nome at 5:30 a.m. on February 2, 1925. His dogs were cold and exhausted, their feet torn and bloody. But the serum was delivered. Kasaan handed it over to the only physician in Nome, and then he began to pull the ice splinters out of his dogs' feet. Within five days of the arrival of the serum, the diphtheria epidemic was halted. And so, out of the Great Race of Mercy to Nome, was born the modern sled race we call the Iditarod (see Chapter 16). Kasaan took Balto on tour (see the following picture of Balto after the Great Serum Run). Then the team was sold to a movie producer who made a film called *Balto's Race to Nome*. Afterward, the team was sold again and put on exhibit as a curiosity show. The dogs were abused, neglected, and forgotten until a Cleveland businessman, with the help of Cleveland school children, bought the six remaining dogs for the then astounding sum of \$2,000. The dogs were brought to the Cleveland Zoo and lived out their lives in peace. When Balto died in 1933, he was stuffed and put on display in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.



Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum

During his travels in the east, Seppala left some of his animals with Harry Wheeler of Quebec, who began breeding them. All currently AKC-registered Huskies can trace their ancestry back to this foundation stock.

In New York City's Central Park stands a bronze statue of Balto, paid for by penny collections from children. Many Siberian aficionados resent the fact that it was this dog, rather than Seppala's beloved Togo, whose likeness is sculpted. But it doesn't really matter. The statue symbolizes the boundless courage of all the dogs who made that tremendous journey against the greatest of odds. Togo or Balto — he faces north, forever dreaming, perhaps, of his immortal run in the service of humankind. The inscription reads, "Dedicated to the indomitable spirit of the sled dogs that relayed anti-toxin 600 miles over rough ice, across treacherous waters, through arctic blizzards from Nenana to the relief of a stricken Nome in the winter of 1925. Endurance. Fidelity. Intelligence."

