The Puli is the ancient sheepdog of Hungary. Records show Pulis working the plains of the pusztta as early as the 9th century. However, a detailed account of the Puli's origins and history has been impossible to assemble, due in part to the repeated invasions of Hungary and destruction of important records.

Many believe the Puli had existed as a working sheepdog for thousands of years, perhaps as early as 4500 B.C. in Sumeria. For many years, accepted wisdom had the Puli migrating with the Magyar people as they crossed the steppes of Asia into Hungary. Some believe that the Puli was a dog associated with a people called the Cuman, a Turkic speaking people who originated in Western China near Tibet. Fleeing the Mongols, the Cuman began migrating with their dogs from Asia in 900 A.D.

The Puli we know today was introduced into this country in the mid 1930's as part of an experiment with the United States Department of Agriculture. Due to the problem of herding dogs sometimes killing the very animals they were entrusted to protect, these first Pulis were imported to be evaluated as to intelligence and attitudes as it applies to livestock. These experiments lasted from 1936 to 1941 were conducted in Beltsville, Maryland, and Dubois, Idaho. Unfortunately, World War II broke out and the funding for the experiment dried up. The Pulis were sold at auction. Fortunately, the outbreak of the war found the breed in a relatively secure position...well established in Hungary and other European countries. Without this base, it is doubtful the breed could have survived the many years of war.

Several of the Pulis from the USDA experiment found their way into two kennels... one owned by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kiss, Marlboro, New York, and one owned by Mr. Bronson Williams, Trinity Farm, Frenchtown, New Jersey. These new genes, combined with Pulis already owned by the Kiss', produced some very good dogs. In February, 1937, Louis Kiss registered the first American born litter with the AKC. Mr. Kiss and Mr. Williams became the pioneers on the East Coast.

Meanwhile, on the West Coast, Mr. Nicholas Roosevelt became California's Puli pioneer. As a diplomat...Minister to Hungary from 1930-1933... publicist, soldier and author, his knowledge and love of
the breed led him to establish his kennels in Carmel, California, purchasing his first two Puli puppies from Bronson Williams. Mr. Roosevelt's ability to enlighten others to the breed's amazing intelligence, their ability to understand not only verbal commands but a variety of words/sentences spoken by their shepherds, was very influential in educating others.

As important as the first Puli breeders were, it is a given that the breed would have remained unknown if it were not for a Puli bitch named Juli II. Bred by Bronson Williams, she had been sold as a puppy and worked for two years on a cattle/sheep ranch in Pennsylvania. When the ranch owner decided to sell his property, Juli II was taken to New York. With her keen intelligence, herding ability and absolute devotion to her owners, Juli became the foundation bitch for the SKYSYL Kennels.

Over the years, Juli II produced some outstanding Pulis. From her first litter, she produced Ch Skysyl Apeter-Pan, the first male Puli to place in an American Working group. Ch Skysyl Question Being Is It, “Monday”, was the first Puli to earn a Best In Show. The Skysyl prefix continues today in many pedigrees.

From the time the Skysyl Kennel name was first granted in 1949, Mrs. Owen and other Puli fanciers began a campaign that would result in the organization of the Puli Club of America in 1951.

“Coco”, who had a stellar show record, including five Puli Club of America’s Best of Breed Awards from 1957-1963. CEDWOOD also produced the first white AKC champion, Ch Cedwoods Patti Gray. Ch Cedwood’s Anthony Gray was the first Puli to win an American Working Group.

Ch. Skysyl Fanfare, brother to Ch Skysyl Forester, became and equally important stud for Mr. and Mrs. John B. McManus, GOOSEBERRY HILL, Oregon, Wisconsin. Dogs from CEDWOOD and SKYSYL were the foundation stock for this kennel. However, in 1971, Ch. Pulikcountry’s Apro, CD, was purchased by Mrs. McManus and bred to GOOSEBERRY HILL stock. The combination of these

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he found a home for her with Sylvia and Schuyler Owens. The Owens had many reservations about taking on such a shaggy, smelly, mongrel-looking dog. Up until this meeting, the Owens had never heard of a Puli much less seen one... It didn't take long for Juli to win them over and a love affair began until Juli died at age 17.

The Skysyl Kennel and their stock became foundation dogs for many other Puli kennels...

Ch Skysyl Forester became an important stud for Ellanor Anderson, CEDWOOD Kennels, Bristol, Connecticut. One of Mrs. Anderson's most famous dogs was Ch. Cedwoods Anthony Gray, genes produced some outstanding dogs. Apro, an import, was the second Puli to earn a Best In Show.

Skysyl Christopher Columbus, CDX, became part of the founding stock of KYLEND Kennels, Rehoboth, Massachusetts. As a kennel known for producing many obedience champions, Chris became a
sire of importance when he sired Ch Kylends Watch It, who won an impressive 54 Best of Breeds and 21 Group Placements.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph De Lengyel, MAGYAR PUSZTA, Englishtown, New Jersey, were Hungarians who emigrated to the United States in the early 1950’s. The foundation stock was an imported female bred to Skysyl Challenge. Thus began the MAGYR PUSZTA kennels. Because of their ties to Hungary and their strong friendship with Dr. Imre Bordacs, a internationally recognized Puli authority, many new bloodlines were imported producing some handsome Pulis.

The MAGYAR PULI Kennel, Far Hills, New Jersey, was established by Donald Cook in 1948. Situated on a former estate, with large fields for herding, Mr. Cook believed strongly in socialization and, as such, always had several litters of different ages in the house to greet guests. One of the MAGYAR bitches, Ch Magyar’s Bodri, became and invaluable breeding matron for SKYSYL.

HUNNIA PULI Kennels was owned by Leslie and Klara Benis. Tarzana, California. Mr. Benis was an author and AKC Judge. He emigrated from Hungary after the 1956 Revolution. Working with Sara Nagy, his mother Eva Benis and Dr. Imre Bordacs, imported many excellent Hungarian dogs. One of the most famous was Ch Szavolgyi Puszi Pajtas, “Minka”.

WALLBANGER PULIS, Pottstown, Pennsylvania, is owned by Ms. Ann Bowley. Ann worked for SKYSYL Kennels and carries on the lines today. Ch Wallbanger Kermit J. Bounce, bred by Ann out of the top winning BIS Ch Skysyl Havery J. Wallbanger, was the first Puli to win a Group 1 at Westminster Kennel Club in New York.

Some other prominent Puli kennels of the time include HILLWOOD, owned by Mrs. Ellen Iversen; MAROEBE, owned by Mr. and Mrs. William Liley, III; RIMWALD, owned by Dr. and Mrs. Harvey Monday; PEBBLETREE FARM, owned by Mr. and Mrs. William Rummel and SZEDER PULI, owned by Dr. Mary Wakeman.

Although time/space constraints make it impossible to mention each and every Puli kennel that had an influence on the breed in the United States. The above named people and others, with their hard work and determination, have helped make the breed what it is today. The little shaggy dogs with the big hearts, great enthusiasm, monumental intelligence and devotion to their owners, still work the fields today much as they did centuries ago.

With the small gene pool that exists today, it is important for all breeders to remember those who have gone before, and, in all breeding efforts, remember the standard.