

TOM DORNIN

Mr. Tom Dornin from Scottsville, Virginia, was inducted into the ARHA Hall of Fame on October 23, 1993. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame, not because of success in competing his beagles in ARHA competition; he did not participate in competition, but because of all of the contributions he made in the preservation of the beagle as a viable rabbit hunting hound and for sharing his knowledge with beaglers through a series of articles he wrote for *The Rabbit Hunter*.

Tom was born September 28, 1908 and passed away January 20, 1994; three months after being inducted into the Hall of Fame. Tom's health was failing at the time of the induction and he asked his good friend, Rod Place, to accept the plaque for him.

Tom and Velta Dornin owned the Little Ireland Kennels and bred hunting beagles at the time when the "trailers" were breeding slower and slower hounds for brace competition. Tom was not a man to "follow the crowd" and did not become involved in this competition; in fact, he was very outspoken against the breeding that was being done and he continually spoke out (and wrote many articles) criticizing the breeding that was producing the "walkie talkie" beagles. Tom Dornin: "These were not rabbit hunting hounds and I was very upset to learn that some of the breeders were breeding crippled dogs to slow them down for the brace competition."

Over the years several of today's breeders had the opportunity to discuss their breeding programs with Tom. If you expected him to just agree with what you had to say to appease you, forget it! Tom was very outspoken. He never asked for you to agree with him and he never tried to tell you how you should conduct your breeding program, but he never held back if he felt you were being "kennel blind" and just following a trend because that was what others were doing. Tom told one breeder, "I believe you are doing the single, most important thing correctly. That is; you continue to learn and seem to realize that anyone must continue to learn if they are to get far in breeding beagles." and, "wisdom is the ability to sort out the truth from the bragging and kennel blindness."

Some of today's finest hunting beagles carry the Little Ireland bloodlines and many of the people who are breeding excellent hunting beagles today owe a great deal to Tom Dornin for the knowledge he has passed on to so many of us; and for his work in helping to preserve the beagle as a rabbit hunting hound.