

Bobbie the Wonder Dog

By Susan Stelljes

Bobbie the Wonder Dog, of Silverton, was the canine hero in a story that became a national sensation. On a February day in 1924, the two-year-old scotch-collie mix appeared on the doorstep of his owners, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brazier. What amazed them was that they had not seen their dog since he had disappeared six months earlier during a car trip in Indiana. Bobbie—mangy, scrawny, feet worn to the bone—appeared to have walked the entire distance to Silverton by himself.

The local paper, the *Silverton Appeal*, published the story of Bobbie's cross-country trek, and it quickly spread to newspapers across the country. The Braziers received hundreds of letters from people simply addressed to "Bobbie, the Wonder Dog" or "Silverton's Bobbie." Some people claimed they had seen Bobbie and were able to identify him by his distinguishing features.

Officials from the Oregon Humane Society launched an investigation into the Braziers' claims and were able to confirm that Bobbie had indeed traveled 2,800 miles in the dead of winter to return home.

A much-celebrated dog Bobbie received medals, keys to cities, and a jewel-studded harness and collar. He was the guest of honor at the Portland Home Show, where over 40,000 people came to view him, and he was presented with his own dog-sized bungalow.

Bobbie's story was featured in "Ripley's Believe It or Not" and *Bobbie, a Great Collie*, by Charles Alexander. Bobbie played himself in the silent film *The Call of the West*, a reel of which is in the archives of the Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Upon his death in 1927, Bobbie was buried with honors at the Oregon Humane Society. Portland Mayor George Baker gave the eulogy. Rin Tin Tin, a German shepherd who was a Hollywood film star, later laid a wreath at his grave.

Sources

Alexander, Charles D. *Bobbie, a Great Collie*. New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1926.

Brazier, G.F. "Bobbie: The Wonder Dog of Oregon." From *Animal Pals*, Curtis Wager-Smith, ed. Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Company, 1924.http://silvertonor.com/murals/bobbie/bobbie_wonder_dog2.htm

Stelljes, Susan *Wonder Dog, the Story of Silverton Bobbie*. Portland: For the Love of Dog Books, 2005.

"Call of the West," featuring the wonder dog Bobbie. Oregon Historical Society. Film. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rot22X4Z0ys&feature=youtu.be>

The Oregon Encyclopedia

https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/bobbie_the_wonder_dog/