

# Tortoise-Shell Tom Cats Wanted By Scientists to Realize Ambition

BY DELOS SMITH  
United Press Science Editor  
New York—Two scientists would be happy to receive kittens from whatever source by whatever means of transport—provided the litters contain one or more tortoise-

shell males. It is the scientific ambition of Lucian M. Sprague and Clyde Stormont of the University of California's school of veterinary medicine at Davis, Calif., to solve a long last a prime mystery of cats.

For that reason they appealed through the American Genetic Association for male tortoise-shells and their litter mates. But they don't expect to get many, if any.

The mystery is why tortoise-shell toms are so exceedingly rare when nature seems to have no trouble producing tortoise-shell females in sizeable numbers.

Intensifying this mystery is the fact that male tortoise-shells are almost always sterile but not always, while sterility is not a notable feature of tortoise-shell females.

Now, if there was no such animal as a tortoise-shell tom, the explanation wouldn't be too difficult, as the scientists pointed out. A pair of genes in the chromosomes of inheritance in cat germ cells, stand for color—in the case of tortoise-shells, one stands for black, the other for orange.

In the combining of chromosomes in the fertilized egg, two oranges would result in an orange cat, two blacks in a black cat, and one orange and one black in a tortoise-shell cat. If the combining of black and

orange were "sex-linked," they could combine only if the sex genes were in the female combination.

## Shady Cove Couple Files Damage Suit

Troy and Ann Haynie, post office box 236, Shady Cove, have filed a complaint in circuit court against Norman T. Hanson, Pleasanton, Calif., and are seeking \$4,503 settlement of a dispute involving timber.

In the complaint, the Haynies claim they are owners of four tracts of real property in the Shady Cove-Trail area. They state that in March and April of this year the defendant "willfully and unlawfully" entered the area and cut down and carried away trees and timber belonging to the plaintiffs.

They also charge that the defendant converted and disposed of the timber, valued at \$1,501, to his own use. They are asking judgment against the defendant in treble damages of \$4,503, plus costs of the suit and other relief the court may deem justified.

Representing the Haynies is Robert A. Boyer.

But nature crosses that up with an occasional male tortoise-shell, which is one part of the mystery. Sprague and Stormont examined a theory that male tortoise-shells are genetically female which in the embryonic state were influenced toward structural masculinity. Unfortunately for that theory, a few male tortoise-shells have been minutely dissected. There were no vestiges of female structure; structurally they were 100 per cent male.

The scientists constructed a theory of their own. They suggested it all could begin if the membranes enclosing two cat embryos got their veins joined by accident, which would result in an interchange by way of flowing blood. Though womb mates, the divisions of their genes could have come out dif-

ferently and their heredity would be different. But the interchange would modify this difference. If one of the joined embryos was female and destined to be a tortoise-shell and the other was a male, destined to be either orange or black, it could make the male tortoise-shell instead—and at the same time impose a chemical set-up that would prevent male germ cells and so bring about sterility.

If Sprague and Stormont can only get their hands on the right kinds of cats, they may be able to prove that this theory is a fact or otherwise end the mystery of how the tortoise-shell tom got that way.

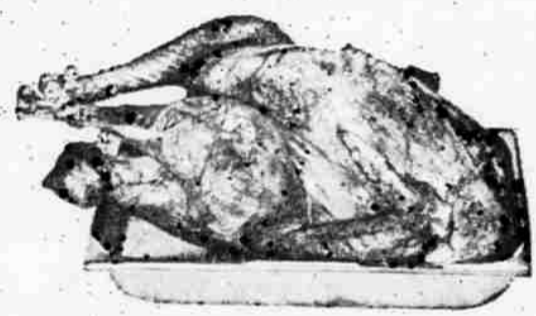
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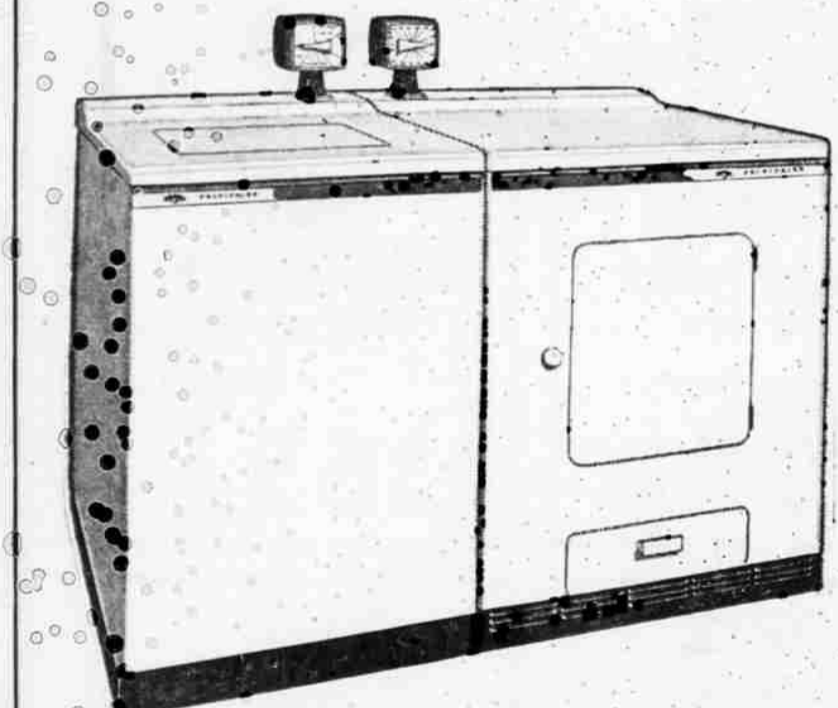
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