About 200 years ago these big, white and black dogs were spotted on the island Newfoundland by European fishermen. The 'dogs of Newfoundland' were present on the island in great numbers and helped the fishermen by towing nets out the water to the mainland. They also helped to bring people who threatened to drown, to safety. Because of their appealing appearance and high swimming skills these giants were brought to England by the European fishermen.

It is believed that around 1770 these dogs have been exported to England in great numbers. However, these dogs were seen and reported much earlier. These dogs were originally much higher and with longer legs than nowadays. Brought to Europe they were more than 110 cm high and were considered to be the tallest dog in the World. During the time Landseers were crossed with the Newfoundland which were much lower and their height decreased. Because of their impressive appearance and skills they were the subject of numerous books and paintings.

The first written reports of 'the dog of Newfoundland' are from 1732 by a "Person of Quality" in the book "The Gentlemen farrier". This is followed by "An History of the Earth and Animated Nature" dated 1774 written by Oliver Goldsmith. This is a very extensive and impressing description of 'the dog of Newfoundland'.

In 1778 the 'dog of Newfoundland' is first reported on our continent by E.A. Zimmerman. In 1790 Thomas Bewick's famous work follows: "A General History of Quadrupeds". His work contains a picture (drawing) of the dog.
One of the most famous works Epitaph to a Dog (also sometimes referred to as 'Inscription on the Monument to a Newfoundland Dog') is a poem by the famous English poet Lord Byron.
It was written in 1808 in honour of his Newfoundland dog, Boatswain, who had just died of rabies. When Boatswain contracted the disease, Byron reportedly nursed him without any fear of becoming bitten and infected. The poem is inscribed on Boatswain's tomb, which is larger than Byron's, at Newstead Abbey, Byron's estate.

Epitaph to a Dog

Near this Spot are deposited the Remains of one who possessed Beauty without Vanity, Strength without Insolence, Courage without Ferosity, and all the virtues of Man without his Vices. This praise, which would be unmeaning Flattery if inscribed over human Ashes, is but a just tribute to the Memory of BOATSWAIN, a DOG, who was born in Newfoundland May 1803 and died at Newstead Nov. 18, 1808.
From that moment until about 1880 there are at least 60 books known to us and a large number of paintings that include the large white and black dogs. The most famous painting ever is "A Distinguished Member of Humane Society" painted by the famous animal renowned painter Sir Edwin Landseer in 1838. Because Sir Edwin Landseer always painted these large white and black dogs these dogs where referred to as "Landseer-dogs". This explains how the Landseer got his name.

"A Distinguished Member of Humane Society" is a portrait of large white and black dog. The dog portrayed is believed to have saved more than 20 people from drowning. It therefore was adopted as a member of the humane society.
History
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"Saved", author Sir Edwin Landseer

In England these dogs were crossed with the black Newfoundland regularly and it was soon a fact that there were more differences between these 2 dogs than just their colour. Gradually it became clear that the white and black dogs were much higher and more active than the black variety. One could clearly see the differences.

The first pure Landseer litter was probably born in Holland in 1893. The second Landseer litter was born in Switzerland in 1902 and this litter may be considered to be the revival of the Landseer on the European mainland. Some breeders attempted to build the breed back up but their efforts were thwarted. During World War I when most of these dogs were killed. After World War I some enthusiastic breeders in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland began breeding these dogs again. Between 1945 and 1960 the Landseer Continental Type was bred as a part of the Newfoundland Clubs in Europe.

As the dogs had many differences to the Newfoundland and the popularity of the Landseer E.C.T grew, the breed was recognized as a separate breed by the FCI in 1960. The breed was registered and its popularity continues to soar. The breed spread and can now be seen all over Europe.

Landseer-Newfoundlands have usually more black on their body and blacker heads. The name 'Landseer-Newfoundland' is mostly used to indicate the colour of the Newfoundland. This is not the same as Landseer E.C.T. Besides the colour, the characters are also different: a Landseer E.C.T. is much more active and remains active till his last day.