



In 1996 **Zaire** issued a Souvenir Sheet for *Working Dogs*. Shown in the top right hand corner is a blind man with a German shepherd *Guide dog*.

This issue, like many others, was issued by a country that has no Guide Dog training facilities and no blind people using guide dogs.

*One might be led to think...that the history and training of dog guides began with the German effort following World War I. Yet it has never been clear who it was who thought of the idea and who was the first to begin systematic training. The Germans themselves, in the publicity which came out about these dogs in the early 1920s, go back to the comments made in Vienna in 1819 by Father Klein, who, briefly, in his book **Textbook For Teaching The Blind**, sketches an outline for training dogs for this purpose.*

His instructions translated are as follow:

In an institute for the blind, dogs can also be prepared to serve as guides to such of the blind as are accustomed to walk about.

For this, the poodle and shepherd dogs are the most useful.

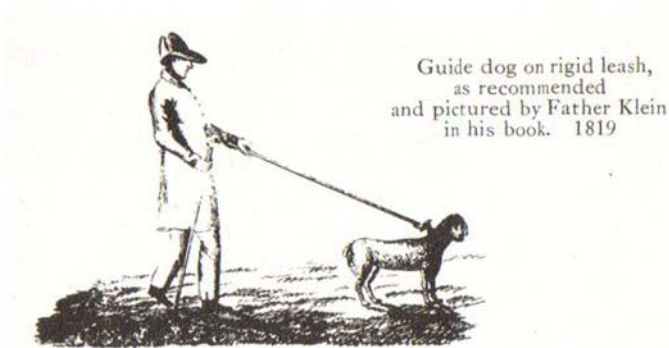
From the collar of the dog extends either a strap or a stick which is grasped by the left hand of the blind person, who also uses a cane in the right hand.

The rigid stick must run through a loose brace around the body of the dog, so that a side movement of the animal is fully felt in the hands of the blind person. The guiding stick is arranged with a crossbar in

such a manner that it can easily be fastened to the collar of the dog; and it is also has, near the top, a loop, so that the hand of the blind person will not lose its grip. This use of the guiding stick has the advantage that a blind person notices at once when the dog is standing still, which is not true when he is led by a strap.

Coon, Nelson. *A Brief History of Dog Guides for the Blind*.
Morristown, New Jersey: The Seeing Eye, Inc.
1959.

Pictures Past and Present that show what Klein wrote about in 1819 and how close that is to today on the use of Guide Dogs.



1819

Guide dog on rigid leash, as recommended and pictured by Father Klein in his book.
Note: The dog looks like a poodle.



2005

Tiina Nummi-Sodergren, president of The Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired with her poodle Guide Dog, Mira.
From "SRF Perspektiv," 4/2005.